A MARVEL MONTHLY

Vol.1 No.4 50p

STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND COMICS

HULK
IN THE MEDIA

WAR OF THE WORLDS

JOHN BOORMAN'S MERLIN

STAR TREK
Latest movie news

TOLKIEN

~on film & tv

By way of a sneak preview – Three fantastic character shots from MCA/Universal's upcoming science fiction epic, **Battlestar Galactica**. Next month – lots more information and some fabulous colour shots. Don't miss it.

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STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND COMICS

Volume 1, No. 4 Nov 1978

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For all too long, science fiction has been a risky area in publishing. Outside of the fiction digests, few publishers dared produce a science fiction magazine. Fewer still succeeded. Those who did found it necessary to widen their market appeal through including other topics, making their end products hodge-podge affairs with large chunks of titillation, or *Scientific American* material. The market for a pure media fantasy magazine was considered . . . nil.

Having placed a proverbial toe in the water, with our first three issues, we now feel confident such a market *does* exist, without need to rely on tangential material.

So confident, in fact, that you won't have to wait two months between issues, or even six weeks.

This issue marks the first monthly edition of **Starburst.** And our promise to you, the reader, is that you won't have to plod through pages of digest fiction rejects, or scantily-clad "sci-fi" heroines, or science fact reports.

What *we* offer is science fantasy in television, cinema, comics, records, posters, books . . . wherever! Each month we'll be bringing you a full issue of up-to-the-minute news, views and opinions of what's happening in the wonderful media of science fiction and fantasy.

Be here.

Editor.

The Hulk on TV 4
From **Captain Z–ro** to **The Incredible Hulk**, superheroes are running, leaping and flying across our tv screens in droves. In this special feature we chronicle the triumphs and flops of the tv superfolk, past and present.

Tolkien on Film 10
From Bakshi's **Wizards** to the Rankin-Bass tv movie of **The Hobbit** and the feature film of **Lord of the Rings** we look at Tolkienesque fantasy on both the big and small screens.

The Starburst Interview 14
Stirling Silliphant, the scriptwriter behind such box office smashes as **Towering Inferno** and **The Swarm**, talks to **Starburst** about his new fantasy project **Hiero's Journey.**

War of the Worlds 22
With George Pal threatening to remake the 1953 classic **War of the Worlds** we take a retrospective look at the original movie.

Giant Poster 24
Our bonus 16½" × 11½", full-colour reproduction of the collectors' item first release poster for **War of the Worlds.**

Boorman on Merlin 28
John Boorman, writer/director/producer of such classics as **Zardoz** and **Deliverance** talks to Tony Crawley about his epic fantasy project, **Merlin.**

Things to Come 36
Our monthly look at upcoming events in the world of tv and cinema fantasy.

Star Trek Update 41
Is it a tv show? Is it a movie? All your questions about Gene Roddenberry's pet project are answered in this special news feature.

Starburst Reviews 42
Our book reviews march on joined this month by a special sf record review section.

A Good Woman 45
The fantasy tale of an elf who wanted a human girl so badly that he could taste. it. A full-colour two page comic strip.

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Page 4

Page 31

Page 41

SMALL SCREEN SUPERHEROES

THE HULK

A look at the development of the comic book superhero on the small screen, from its science fiction '50s stars to its latest top rating Incredible Hulk.

by Mark Fallon, Derek Hacket and Alan Bodger

Recent years have seen a veritable army of superhero-type characters jostling for a position on the tv screens. Their success has varied depending on the show. Some have been phenomenal hits like **The Six Million Dollar Man** while others have faded into obscurity almost overnight like the David McCallum version of **The Invisible Man.**

The formative years of the science-fantasy hero go back to the 1949-1955 period when the infant television in America began adopting themes and genres from radio, theatre and the movies, applying them accordingly to the small-screen. These early shows (**Captain Video, Tom Corbett, Space Cadet, Superman,** etc.) were mainly derived from the world of the comic-book and the cinema sub-division of serials—themselves founded on 1930s pulp literature.

The most way-out, bizarre characters that 1950s tv offered were **Buck Rogers, Rocky Jones, Captain Z-Ro, Flash Gordon** and **The Invisible Man**—all of which are pretty tame by today's standards.

The 1960s saw the advent of such spectacular folk as Britain's **Doctor Who** and the American tv series that brought Bruce Lee to the world's attention, **The Green Hornet.** The sixties also marked the debut of the now-classic superhero tv series **Batman. Batman** was a somewhat strange way of adapting characters and themes from the comic books to the weekly format of television. The series began as an earnest, if juvenile, attempt to transfer the character to the small screen. The result was a hilarious blend of 'camp' humour and self-parody which attracted not only the very young but the college crowd as well. The show was a success which enjoyed a long run, and even had a rebound effect on the original comic books. The comic version of **Batman** was revamped into the same style of satire and rode high on the crest of the faddish wave which made the tv series such a hit. Unfortunately, as the wave receded and the show began to falter, the publishers of **Batman** comics were left with an outdated fad—a superhero character that had become, in effect, a parody of a parody.

Then came the swing in a different direction, as **Wonder Woman** began to generate a more serious interest from the tv companies in the comic-book to tele-screen superperson. Back in 1967, **Batman** producer William Dozier assigned writer Stanley Ralph Ross (one of the better tv **Batman** writers) to draft a **Wonder Woman** script. This script, unfortunately, never went before the cameras, and the idea retired to the limbo-land of forgotten projects.

It wasn't until some years later when Warner Bros decided to work on a **Wonder Woman** pilot of their own that Ross was brought back to write another pilot script. Ross' idea was not to ridicule the character, as the **Batman** show had done, but to produce an exciting and 'realistic' adventure series.

Warners rejected Ross' ideas and went ahead with their own, turning out the abysmal tv movie **Wonder Woman** (1975), starring Cathy Lee Crosby. The producers had apparently decided that the best way to present super-powered characters in an adult fashion was to first dispense with the 'ridiculous' costume, then get rid of all the other comic-book devices like invisible planes and magic lassoes. Unfortunately the superpowers of the character taken out of the comic-book framework only served to make the tv version of Wonder Woman even more ridiculous and this first pilot was a disaster.

In desperation Warners brought back Ross and he patterned his version of Wonder Woman directly after the original

The Hulk looks for something to destroy. Right: Dr Banner and friend, Bixby and Ferrigno pose for a publicity picture.

Charles Moulton story, setting the character in the World War Two period. **The New Original Wonder Woman,** featuring the lovely Lynda Carter, was (initially) a perfect rendition of the comic character—opening up the way for further comic-to-tv superheroes.

Pretty soon the tv screen was filling up with strange 'heroes'; **The Gemini Man, The Bionic Woman, Man From Atlantis, Spiderman** . . . and **The Incredible Hulk.**

The character of the Hulk came from the amazingly creative mind of Marvel Comics chief Stan Lee back in 1962 and was based very much on the success of Marvel's **Fantastic Four** comic-book, specifically the Ben Grimm/Thing character. Extending The Thing's surprisingly popular "hideous hero" role, Lee created his second misunderstood monster, The Hulk—essentially a composite of the Frankenstein monster, Notre Dame's Quasimodo and Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde. Stan Lee (in his **Origins of Marvel Comics,** *Simon & Schuster,* 1974) said: 'I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the Frankenstein monster. No one could ever convince me that he was the bad guy, the villain, or the menace.' Thus, the Hulk has become '. . . big and brutish enough to make him feared by all who met him and yet with a certain tragic appeal . . .'

The Hulk appeared for the first time on American tv in early '78, via two feature-length pilot movies which were produced, directed and written for the small-screen by Kenneth Johnson. Johnson, working through Universal Studios, had set both the **Six Million Dollar Man** and **The Bionic Woman** on their successful paths and was the appropriate talent for launching **The Incredible Hulk.**

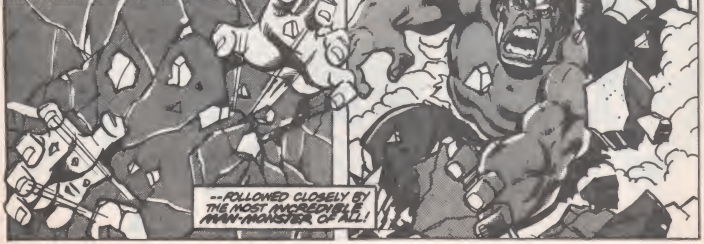
At first, Johnson didn't want to take on the task of transforming the successful comic-book character onto tv, having already spent many years operating out of the Bionic bureau, and at first believing the Hulk format to be an unsuitable tv subject. However, after familiarising himself with the sympathetic Bruce Banner character and his bizarre alter ego, Johnson accepted the assignment and turned in what has become one of the best shows in the tv superhero strain. Johnson eventually began to see all manner of plot and character development in the theme: '. . . I began to be intrigued by the fact that with **The Hulk** there could be a non-comic book context—a real man with a very real handicap.'

Most other characters that become 'afflicted' with super powers which they can't really understand, and are somewhat afraid of, are basically too intrigued with their new-found 'magic' and are reluctant to dispose of the powers. Bruce (re-named David) Banner really has a problem—he doesn't *want* the 'magic' of being able to turn into The Hulk, a green-skinned brute with superhuman strength.

The Incredible Hulk, in a way, has been 'blended' to suit television and certain elements show through; the format strongly corresponds to **The Fugitive** (through Banner's quest theme) as well as **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.**

Yet one major difference can be seen in the **Incredible Hulk** tv show. Unlike the **Batman, Spiderman** and **Wonder Woman** format, which limit themselves to the

Enter the Hulk! A dynamic two-frame sequence from the Marvel comic strip, The Incredible Hulk.



Above: Lou Ferrigno relaxes as the latex face-piece of his Hulk makeup is positioned and attached. Below: Bill Bixby has a similar face-piece applied so that the all-important transformation can be filmed, resulting in a smooth transition from Banner to Hulk.

superhero & loving juvenile market, a wider audience is being aimed at by Hulk producers Universal Studios.

The usual superhero tv series tends to set up a storyline which revolves around the costumed hero figure, thus making the final story as bizarre as the central character (ie a larger-than-life hero needs even more absurd villains). But in **The Hulk** the idea is to take a basic plot that could work equally well for **Kojak, Starsky & Hutch** or **The Rockford Files:** kidnapping, terrorism, robbery or murder. Develop the theme, flesh it'out, inject David Banner into the situation and then the only fantasy angle is inserted in the form of the Incredible Hulk.

This way, the whole family can easily get involved with the plot and its characters *before* the absurdly fantastic Hulk appears. Even then, the title character makes only three somewhat brief appearances per episode, leaving the younger viewer craving for more, and the older viewer willing to accept the slight touch of fantasy.

The viewer identification and softer approach is taken even further away from the standard superhero concepts by introducing that sure - fire hit ingredient, *romance*. The pilot show you may recall bore a greater resemblance to the movie **Love Story** in its opening ten minutes than an action/fantasy programme. This aspect being continually played up by allowing the excellent starring actor, Bill Bixby, some human emotion through romance set against the constant knowledge that he cannot risk emotional involvement because of his radioactive "burden", his destructive alter-ego.

Whether the concept will become formularised in time, with the standard three appearances of the Hulk *plus* Banner's quest for a way to lose his alter-ego *plus*

"You won't like me when I'm angry!"

his romantic entanglement/standoffishness every week we have yet to see. Many fresh, original shows have received great praise for their first few episodes, only to deteriorate into monotony over the season(s), as scripting and shooting schedules tighten, budgets shorten, top writers leave, and originality fades. **Star Trek** was a classic example of this.

Yet both Stan Lee and Kenneth Johnson are quite satisfied with the series and with Bixby's David Banner and Lou Ferrigno's Hulk characterisations — although Lee openly admits wanting The Hulk to speak—as does the comic's version. The human elements, the basic reactions in an abnormal setting are the more interesting features in Johnson's treatment of the show. **The Incredible Hulk** is, happily, not intended to be a superhero-versus-creatures-from-outer-space show, which has been the bane of many similar series.

Originally The Hulk rights were bought by MCA/Universal as part of a package deal which included the Marvel characters **Dr Strange, The Human Torch, Captain America** and **Ms Marvel.**

Initially MCA planned to produce a pilot for each of the superheroes in turn but the overwhelming success of the **Hulk** convinced them that they should develop **The Hulk** into a regular series before giving the green light to the next character for the small screen treatment.

The Dr Strange pilot tv movie was aired in early September in the United States and starred Peter Hooten (last seen in **Orca—The Killer Whale**) as the Greenich Village based sorcerer.

So with superheroes crashing into the worlds of cinema *and* tv, let's hope the Incredible Hulk series proves as strong as its title star!

Maya Merchandising

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TOLKIEN ON FILM

Even though the sf movie explosion has not yet even begun to subside, a new cinematic trend is being warmed up in the wings to challenge the apparently unassailable position of the sf movies at the top of the box office charts. Already under way are umpteen projects in the heroic fantasy vein, among them a high-budget, animated version of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Despite the poor reception of an earlier animated Tolkien project, The Hobbit, which saw TV release in the US last year, Lord of the Rings forges ahead, though we'll reserve final judgement on this Ralph (Fritz the Cat, Wizards) Bakshi production until the project sees the light of day.

Feature by Bob Sheridan

THE HOBBIT
OR THERE AND BACK AGAIN

Tolkien's beloved tales of the fantastic world known as Middle-earth would seem to make ideal source material for animated films. However, lovers of both J.R.R. Tolkien and cartoon animation have already suffered one disappointment in this department, in the form of the television presentation of The Hobbit.

Produced by Arthur Rankin Jr and Jules Bass, The Hobbit was highly touted prior to its premiere on the American NBC television network. The advance information on the show was quite encouraging. Reportedly, the Rankin/Bass organisation rejected half a dozen scripts before settling on one which satisfied all of the "experts" involved in the project (exactly what these people were experts at was never revealed).

For the voices of Tolkiens' characters, such talents as Orson Bean, Cyril Richard, John Huston and Hans Conreid were rounded up. Nearly 200 artists — illustrators, background designers, inkers, continuity and layout artists — were employed, and this team produced more than 110,000 drawings for the 90 minute show. Advance stills from The Hobbit revealed the artwork to be lush and pleasingly stylised.

Unfortunately, most hopes raised by the advance publicity for The Hobbit were quickly dashed when the show was actually aired. While the art was indeed as lush as expected, both the animation and overall pacing of the show were curiously lifeless. It would be difficult to evaluate Romeo Muller's script, as the sluggish quality of the visuals rendered the film totally uninvolving. Worse, the show incorporated 13 songs of embarrassingly poor quality even by the standards of "kiddie" shows, which The Hobbit was presumably intended not to be. Despite all this, the plot gave the impression of being workable, and one can only wonder how such a magical tale could be filmed so unengagingly.

Hobbits, for those unfamiliar with Tolkien, are small, gentle fellows who are quite content to live uneventful lives. Bilbo Baggins (voice by Orson Bean) is the hobbit of the tale's title, and we first meet him in his cavelike home, sitting by the fire reading a book and smoking his pipe. Unfortunately for Bilbo, this peaceful existence is not to continue for long. Gandalf the Wizard (John Huston) stops by, offering to send Bilbo off on a great adventure. Bilbo is somewhat less than ecstatic about the

From the opening sequence of the tv movie, **The Hobbit**, *Bilbo Baggins settles down by the fire.*

idea, maintaining that hobbits are "plain quiet folk" who have "no use for adventures".

Despite his objections, Bilbo is convinced to take up Gandalf's quest. Accompanied much of the way by thirteen bearded dwarfs, Bilbo sets off eastward to find a stolen treasure which lies in a remote and foreboding locale called Lonely Mountain. Along the way, Bilbo and his comrades encounter a succession of oafish trolls, menacing spiders, friendly elves, and heroic eagles.

Somehow all of these incidents in Bilbo's great adventure are equally unexciting, leading up to a spectacular climax which unfortunately only points out how far superior Walt Disney's finale for Sleeping Beauty was. Like the Disney film, The Hobbit concludes its adventure with a battle against an enormous dragon, Smaug. But, despite an evil voice provided by Richard Boone, it does not manage to produce the obviously intended thrills and catharsis which viewers had every right to expect.

Only one sequence in The Hobbit stands out from the rest. It involves an eerie "creature of darkness" called Gollum (voice credited to "Theodore"), with white eyes and a chilling raspy voice. From the moment when Bilbo enters Gollum's subterranean domain the tone of The Hobbit changes. The previous blandness is replaced by an effective mood of atmospheric terror, which sadly gives way to the previous tone as soon as the sequence ends.

To tie in with the airing of The Hobbit *on show Ballantine Books published a new edition of Tolkien's book illustrated throughout with over 200 stunning colour stills from the film.*

The Lord of the Rings

As most fantasy fans are already aware, The Hobbit did not mark the end of the road for Tolkien's creations, as far as animated adaptations are concerned. Ralph Bakshi, who entered the world of cinematic features with his animated version of R. Crumb's Fritz The Cat, is currently filming Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings.

Bakshi's main source of notoriety thus far has been centered around the fact that he was the first animator to produce "adult" cartoon features. Early Bakshi features such as Heavy Traffic and Coonskin were singled out for their offensive natures more so than any technical or aesthetic qualities. Even Bakshi's last film to date, Wizards (1977, see review in Starburst 2), though substantially milder than his other works, was obviously not designed with pre-teen audiences in mind. Both the language and visuals used in Wizards derived directly from underground comics, which have always been infamous for going far beyond the limits of so-called "taste" which mainstream comic books conform to.

How, then, is the outrageous Bakshi approaching the world of Tolkien, whose works are beloved by members of every age group. The answer comes from Bakshi himself, who claims that his Lord of the Rings will be entirely different from any of his other films — or any other film ever made! In terms of content, Bakshi claims that his film will be a sword and sorcery epic for all ages. Further, Bakshi promises that his film of The Lord of the Rings will be as faithful to Tolkien as possible.

Bakshi first became interested in the project when he read Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy when he was an 18 year old unknown. Since then, the Tolkien opus has been announced as a Disney

project, and then the rights went through the hands of such filmmakers as John Boorman (See page 28) and Stanley Kubrick. But now Bakshi has managed to get the rights for himself, and he maintains that he will be avoiding mistakes in approach which the other filmmakers had made. "Their problem was that they tried to take the three books and condense them into one film", according to Bakshi. "We have a legitimate cliff-hanging film that doesn't end."

Exactly how much of Tolkien's work Bakshi is planning to put on film has not yet been made clear, but it is known that The Lord of the Rings is currently planned as a four hour, two-part film. Understandably, Bakshi is reluctant to reveal just what audiences will be seeing when the project is completed. Voices for the film will be provided by a big-name British cast, but Bakshi does not want to exploit their names to promote the film. Instead, The Lord of the Rings will be promoted as "a Tolkien film".

Once again, a Tolkien project is promising a lot to its audience; but only time will tell whether or not that promise will be fulfilled. Bakshi announced that the film will make a new dimension in realistic animation, but it turns out that his new, "breakthrough" process is actually an elaboration of the rotoscope process devised by Max and Dave Fleischer over a half-century ago for their Out of the Inkwell series of short subjects. This process employs live-action footage which serves as a direct model for the animation artists. While Bakshi's "innovation" hardly seems to deserve the name, he is using the process on a level never before approached. *All* of The Lord of the Rings has already been filmed in live-action with a cast numbering over a thousand, and Bakshi's 200 man animation staff is converting this footage into cartoon form.

Meanwhile, the Rankin/Bass team have announced a made-for-TV sequel to The Hobbit. Of the two Tolkien projects in the offing, Bakshi's certainly appears to have the better chance for success, at least quality-wise. Only the release of both will put an end to such speculation; hopefully audiences will be given at least one Tolkien adaptation worthy of its source. ●

A pre-production colour painting from Bakshi's Lord of the Rings *showing Aragorn reviewing the armies of "The Host" gathered to battle the followers of Sauron before the Gate.*

Bilbo's hometown of Underhill as depicted by Ralph Bakshi

Poster artwork for the Sillitphant co-scripted **Silent Flute.**

The Starburst Interview

SILLIPHANT'S JOURNEY

Top Fantasy Screenwriter Speaks

By far the most intriguing property on the Hollywood drawing boards is a mind-blowing sf script that has been gathering dust on a shelf for about three years. Now, thanks to the cinematic sf boom, the project will be transferred to the big screen by Doug Trumbull, the special effects genius behind the smash-hit *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The working title of this original sf concept is *Hiero's Journey*, penned by one of the best screen scribes in Hollywood, Stirling Silliphant.

A one-time sports journalist and later publicity man for Disney and 20th Century-Fox, Silliphant scribbled his first yarn aged five—*The Enchanted Lantern*. He wrote his first movie, about boxer Joe Louis' life, in 1953, and won the Best Screenplay Oscar in 1968 for *In The Heat of the Night*. A liberal and humanist with his heart in the right place, and his conscience on his sleeve, Silliphant's films run the full gamut of small-budget social-consciousness studies to high-blown disaster biggies. Everything from *Village of the Damned*, *The Slender Thread* and *Charly* to *The Poseidon Adventure*, *The Towering Inferno* and his third Irwin Allen opus, *The Swarm*. Plus the *Shaft* series.

On television, he wrote for Alfred Hitchcock, created *Route* 66 and *Longstreet*, the series about a blind detective hero, one episode of which featured—in a rare villainous role—the mercurial Bruce Lee, Silliphant's great friend and kung fu teacher. The film he wrote together with (and for) Lee and James Coburn entitled *The Silent Flute* has lately been made in Israel with Carradine and another cinematic Lee, Christopher.

Silliphant's current work-load includes *Salem's Lot*, from *Carrie* author Stephen King's novel *Jerusalem's Lot* ('Hollywood thought it sounded too Jewish, too Israeli, or simply too religious'); and *Hiero's Journey*—Silliphant's big project. He has been fighting, alongside Doug Trumbull, to get this one backed and made by a major Hollywood studio for the past three years. Despite it being potentially the most arresting sf film ever conceived.

When we first talked about the venture, it seemed close to being called off. Columbia had cold feet about the budget involved. But that was September 1975. George Lucas was still only toying with his *Star Wars* concept, while Steven Spielberg was riding high with *Jaws* and not imparting too much about his hopes for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. And Hollywood thinking, then as always, was dictated by success at the box-office.

Silliphant, however, is well used to waiting around for the green light—and money. His classic *Village of the Damned* was held up by some very peculiar MGM thinking for about two years; even *The Swarm* was passed over to Warner Brothers from 20th Century-Fox, where it should have directly followed *The Poseidon Adventure* to hit the screen around the same time as *Jaws*. Stirling Silliphant, then, is not about to give up on something as close to his heart and soul as *Hiero's Journey*.

And after all, what's another year or two considering the setting . . .

Interview conducted by Tony Crawley

STARBURST: *What, in a nutshell, is the film about?*

SILLIPHANT: Well . . . it takes place in a society 14 million years in the future.

That's one giant leap for mankind. Leaving **1984** *and* **2001** *years behind.*

It is, isn't it? This should be the most advanced jump into the future we've ever seen.

No "stars" then, I take it?

We don't want stars. That would ruin it. Totally ruin it. I don't really know how to describe **Hiero's Journey** . . . but there's something else we *don't* want: usually in action films, where you have people in violent circumstances or environments, the final act—the ultimate resolution—is always one of violence. That is to say, John Wayne shoots and kills the heavies. Jimmy Caan shoots and kills the antagonists on the freighter in **The Killer Elite**. The Cavalry arrive. Indians are shot off their horses. . . . We've seen that all the time in American action films, right? Wherever there's physical danger, life or death situations, the hero always shoots or things are shot out to solve the matter in the end. I can think of hardly any exceptions.

"Usually, in action films the final act—the ultimate resolution—is always one of violence."

And you've written plenty of them yourself, including the **Shaft** *series.*

Right! Positive action always takes place at the climax. But in **Hiero's Journey**, which is *fraught* with physical danger and action from frame to frame, the resolution is not physical. And it is not action. It's intellectual and mystic. Positive and hopeful.

Sounds very much you, in fact.

Right again. I'm pro-people, anti-blood.

Don't beat it out, talk and/or think it out . . .

Well, you don't shoot it out, that's for sure.

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You see, the society which is involved in our story—at the top of the world level at this future point—is a society which does not kill. Doesn't even kill animals and drink blood. It doesn't believe in violence; it actually doesn't eat anything except grain. It's a mental society. In total harmony with itself and with nature. Where everyone is able to understand every other person's thought processes. Yet, it is a totally free society. Primitive, in a way. Because these people are part of the earth and the sky.

For instance, the children are taken from the parents early on. Because the parents simply don't have the facilities to educate them the way these people are educated. They are given back to the parents, though, for so many hours in a day. For love.

Sounds a trifle Communistic.—Thoughts of Mao and all that.

It may well be so. But, for instance, the education includes maybe a whole year understanding what it is to be a bird. Where you simply lie on your back and feel the thermal structures and the movements of winds and watch birds—and you actually become the bird . . . in your head. You can project yourself outwards. You can't fly, you can't lift this bodily junk and fly. But you go out—in your head. This comes really out of *The Teachings of Don Juan* by Carlos Casteneda, a book I've always wanted to film, but it's too mystical, apparently. . . . Not being able to make that film has got to be the great disappointment of my life.

"The society in *Hiero's Journey* is a society which does not kill. Not even animals."

Anyway, that form of teaching is only one small thing. The children also play games with their minds, as well. They will get on the ground and have a small ball on a centre line, and with the use of their minds, try to drive the ball over the line. Their power is that of the mind—so that they can develop it and use it to help keep these ravening creatures which are surrounding them from coming in and eating them.

How long have you been engaged on this project?

Writing it? Oh, I'd say about six or seven months. It was an exhausting job of research.

Research! How do you research life 14 million years on?

I had to follow the laws of nature. I had to project certain conditions for 14 million years from now.

Good to know that you feel humanity might still be around that long. I must say the whole idea sounds exceeding mystical, even esoteric. But it is, I'm assured, a good script.

Except one always hears that. . . . What is a good script?

I don't know! I can tell you what I *think* it is. First of all, it's energy. That's the most important thing. You can read a script, pick up a script, and once you become sensitive to it, within the first two or three pages you can sense either the lack or the abundance of energy in it. Where something *crackles*—in the circumstances of a scene, the approach to a scene. Raymond Chandler once said, 'A good writer is one who can take a cliché and write it as though it has never been used before.' That's what I mean by a different approach to a scene.

So, energy is one. Second, is, unpredictability. We've all become so sophisticated with films, so sated and yet still so open to ideas, that we are insulted when someone gives us the usual crap. On the other hand, when we see someone trying something new, we applaud the effort and we suspend judgement and wait. Now, if he blows it—we kill him!

Example: John Boorman with **Zardoz**. For the first five minutes of that film, I thought I was about to see a miracle. I said, 'Jesus! This man has taken raw celluloid and has created a world that is terrifyingly staggering.' Then it went downhill. He tried to explain it and get all his philosophy into it.

Aren't you about to do the same with **Hiero's Journey**?

Not at all. There is no philosophising because no issues of the 20th Century will be relevant 14 million years from now. I make no comment, while what Boorman did was try to get everything in. Now his explanation for the events in his film may not satisfy me or you—as a matter of fact it won't. We have our own attitudes. So the good film-maker—and the good script—in my opinion, guides the audience and leaves it open. In a sense this is what Altman did with **Nashville**. You can read into that what you do or don't want to. I find it a fascinating film. I love it! I think, maybe, it's the most important American film of the last ten years. Even if it says nothing. That's film-making!

Unpredictability, you mean?

Exactly. Leaving it open for the audience to invest itself. Skilful guidance—not manipulation, because that's dishonest. When I said before, 'I don't really know how to describe **Hiero's Journey**!', I meant it. And that's rather like (director) Altman talking about **Nashville**. He doesn't really know what the film is about. He's given very contrary interviews which prove that he's confused by his own film. That's fine.

When I become so professional that I can tailor-cut every last little stitch in a script, the film won't work. It is in its mistakes that a film can really work. This is why the first **Shaft** worked and the third, which was better than the other two, did not. When I say 'better' it wasn't really. Not on the screen. The first **Shaft** was raw, had mistakes, heaps of them—you could almost see the shadow of the camera boom. But it had an angry kind of vigour to it. And that, I think, goes with what the people want: honesty, challenge, excitement, involvement, unpredictability and energy. Plus they want to be able to get something out of the film to take away to discuss, analyse, think about . . .

From **Hiero's Journey**, *they'll have your credo: pro-people, anti-blood.*

That's it! I think the people will come out of the theatres and go bananas. They'll be saying: 'Holy cow! They've got to be crazy . . . they're really doing something. This film is an affirmation!' And that's the crowd we want.

First of all, the action will take care of the so-called blue-collar crowd, the guys who gas up the cars and fix the Chevrolets. The spectacle of the preachers and things will fascinate the young people—and sure, they'll get it. As the violence is not violence, we'll probably get a PG [*Parental Guidance*] rating in the States [*a possible A in UK*]. For instance, we obviously don't have any vile language. Because people won't swear 14 million

"With *Village of the Damned* they were appalled to find they had bought what they termed an *anti-Catholic* film."

Panther's 1975 edition of the Stirling "Lanier" novelisation to **Hiero's Journey**, *abounding with Leemutes, Snake Heads and hordes of other Tolkienesque characters.*

The Silent Flute. *Recently released by Rank Films, this Silliphant scribed movie combines the violence of previous martial arts films with the eastern philosophies so long lacking, to produce an excellent fantasy film starring David Carradine and Jeff Cooper (above), with guest stars Christopher Lee and Roddy McDowell.*

years from now. We have no sexuality, either. Except in a strange sequence in the tree-tops which is more like a trip. . . .

So the people we want are those who go to yoga classes and read zen books and come to the cinema in Westwood, in Los Angeles, and have coffee after the show and analyse the flick. We really want that kind of group. That's our primary audience. And if we can get them, we're hoping this will become a cult film.

A cult film for your own crowd.

Right! This is one for us.

As opposed to your usual mass audience.

Right again! **The Poseidon Adventure, The Towering Inferno,** and **The Swarm** are essential mass audience films. Scripts where you do it all for them. When you get to **Nashville,** or **Hiero's Journey,** or another of my projects, the vampire picture, **Salem's Lot,** in a sense you're getting into a different kind of film. Into **The Exorcist** or **Rosemary's Baby.** Into films that you haven't always seen before. I would say that's what I always try for in films.

If you can get them made? **Village of the Damned** *took two or three years . . .*

Exactly right! I wrote **Village** at Metro for Ronald Colman. Sadly, he died just as I finished the script. That was 1958. And the studio has gone to all kinds of trouble to buy the book from John Wyndham. I remember they had microfilm made of each page as he finished typing the manuscript. This was then flown over to us in Hollywood, typed up and given to us to work from. Very impressive, right? The change came when turning the finished script over. It wasn't to the people who had gone to all this microfilming trouble, but another bunch of people . . . appalled to find they had bought what they termed an 'anti-Catholic' film.

> **"There is no philosophising in *Hiero's Journey* because no issues of the twentieth century will be relevant 14 million years from now."**

Anti-Catholic . . . ?

Well, they said it dealt with the impregnation of women by creatures from outer space and this obviously parallelled the Immaculate Conception. The studio's Catholic adviser agreed; he found the premise 'insulting' to their religion.

What happened?

The usual . . . Metro junked the script. Put it on the shelf. I got so mad I broke my contract with MGM and went into television and didn't surface again in movies for six years or more. They eventually made the film in Britain, as you know, with George Sanders, Barbara Shelley and people [1960] and it turned out to be one of Metro's top films of the year. And the best reviews I've ever had in my twenty years of writing came on that film.

Motto: Never give up.

You've got it. As of right now I don't know that I'm going to get to make **Hiero's Journey.** I've finished the script. And we have a director, Douglas Trumbull. We have a producer, a young man called Henry Gillis. We've got the studio, Columbia, to have spent already. I would say they're in now for about $300,000. Once you've got into them for that amount, you've a good chance to force them through to the finish. We need, to make the film, about $3½ million. They're willing to give us $2½ million. So we're a million dollars apart. I was hoping on this trip to get a telegram saying that had been resolved. Total silence. Which is ominous. If we don't get it, I'm going to take the film somewhere else.

If Columbia say they can't afford it, I will ask if we can find partners to come in. If they say no to that, we have a turnaround clause which permits us to go out and make a deal somewhere else and repay them their money. And I'll do that, sure I will.

This picture is so important that I will literally go door-to-door to get it made.

And by early 1978, it looks as if he's succeeded . . .

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Yet another huge amount of mail has been received since our last issue, so, as before, we're printing the mein points from some of your letters, interspersed with longer missives, in an attempt to fit as many of your widely ranging idees and views as possible.

Wull donu! You have succeuded in bringing out un excellunt science funtasy magazine thut has not blown apurt utter thu first issue. I huve, howevur, u fuw comments to muke:

(1) I think that udding teluvision to cinemu to SF stories to comic strips gives an uxcellunt selection. A very good idua, jost what wu funs nuud.

(2) Tuku no notice of puoplu who wunt fuuteres on **Bluke's 7, Bionic Wumen, Dr. Who, The Six Million Deller Mun,** utc. If you do, you *will* bu u "Sturburst" und und up liku thu other treshy uffuirs on thu murkut. Watch out! Bet, **Space: 1999 and U.F.O.**—yus, pleasu! They are worthy of going in your magazine. Large photos of Muyu, pleusu. **Space: 1999** was, in my opinion, one of thu best scuincu fiction series on television. A British production us wull! Excellunt speciul uffects und usually good storylinus.

(3) Yuur posters ure not "Gient" us writtun in yoer contents, although they ure uxtremuly good.

(4) Your *Starburst Letters* pugu is vury ubsorbing und interesting. I liku thu idua of just including thu main points from letturs. (How about "Mailbag Burst" for a title?)

(5) I ograu entirely with various luturs in **Starburst Vol. 1 No. 3**—*Roy Bradbury on Close Encounters* wus uxtremely boring und eninturusting.

(6) Wull donu, in bringing us the obscuru **Ster Wurs** interviews. Lut's huur from the unknown stars: Puter Mayhuw (Chewie), Kunny Bekur (R2), David Prowsu (Durth Vuder).

(7) *Things to Come* is grout—well uxtundud!

(8) Pleasu contineu the Mayu Murchandising advertisements, if possible, as they comu in very handy.

(9) Let's pluase huve fuutures on **Fehrenhuit 451, Dork Stor, Silent Running, Clockwork Orangu, The Andromeda Struin,** und **Logen's Run** (thu film).

Finully, very good luck tu yoe, I hopu you reach 10 volumus. When yoe enter volemu 2 I will believe thut you uru huru to stay. Howuver, welcomu to thu sci-fi scene, und, for goodnuss suku, stay huru! You ure worth every penny of 50p.

Steven Oliver, Steurbridge.

Though we've decided to stick to "Starburst Letters" as our heading for this feeture rether than a mere gimmicky title, our theeks go out for all your suggestioos. Such ideas having included "Mailburst", Tell-Star Burst", "Fantasmail", "S.P.A.C.E.—Special Page As Correspondence to the Editor", "Feedback", "Dishdown", "Galaxy Gossip", "Loser Lines", "Cosmic Comments" and countless others.

Thanks for **Starburst 3.** Thu magezine goes from strength te strength (despitu the temporary loss of thu comic strip section, although I suppose that by re-introducing strips in issee 4 yoe will improve on issee 31).

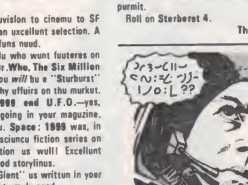
The **CE3K** review wus up to the standard thet the previous two issees have established. It is a wulcomu change to bu able to read intelligent, ustuute ruviews of SF films, which are useelly treeted with casual scorn—although **CE3K** has forced journalists to taku it seriously.

Indeed, the striking feeturu of **Starburst** is its meture, unpatronising attitudu towards the subjects that it covers. All the articles are well-written and interesting, although I foend John Brosnan's *History of SF Films* more like a chronolegicel catulogue than a history. I feel the history should have been prusented in a series of articles, examining the subject in gruuter depth.

The problum with **Thu Prisoner** is that thu one nuuds to seu it so muny times to duvelop any valid theorius ubout it und, unluss onu possussus vidueteping fucilities, thuru is e vust weit for further viewing to chuck uny ideus. When onu is studying u book or u comic, constant refurunce is mudu to thu document to verify every concupt, bet with u TV series such rufurence can only bu mude ut such timus us thu programming schedules purmit.

Roll on **Starberst 4.**

Thee Clurke, Leicester.



I first perchusud yoer muguzine **Sterbersk** when I found it contuinud several pagus of *Jeff Hawke*. I wus vury kuun to make u full collection of the strip.

But, on purchusing nembur 3 und opening the book ut home, I wus dismeyed to find no *Jeff Hawke*! I would bu very mech obligud if you would udvise if yoe intund rusturting thu strip so thet I muy keep a look out for thut issue.

A. J. Whitlock, Kuneington.

While Jeff Hawke *proved immensely popular with some readers, others felt it totally ont of place in the pages of* **Starberst.** *So, by way of compromise, we are currently working on the format of* **Starberst Speciele,** *each to include "minority favourites" to be sold by mail order only through future issues. Watch out for further details in upcoming issues.*

Muy I congratulute yoer muguzinu on an amuzing rip-off. Yoe fuuturud an article on *Bluke's 7 v Logan's Run*—u ruthur childish huading. Thu urticlu, itsulf, wus uqually sub-stundurd, und thun huving roendly insulted **Bluku's** 7 you did not even print one meusly pic from thu surius.

Pet Jenkin, Sulep.

Sorry you disagreed with Tise Velmegi's opinions of **Bleke's 7** *in his feeture on* **Logen's Ren.** *But remember, Pet, the whole article only mentioned* **Bleku's 7** *by way of comparison. As the subject was* **Logan's Ren,** *and we only had sufficient room for 3 pics, we're holding on to* **Bleke** *material until we cover the show more fully. Though individual writers have different views within our pages, our intentions are pretty well summed up in Peter Forman's following letter of comment . . .*

I was very impressed with **Starberst 3**—even moru so thun with the first two issees. It's really good to reed a magezine which cun knock as well as pruise SF; too often they (**Femose Monsters, Sterlog**) seum to treet enything rumotely SF with e sort of ruligious deference.

Glad to see thut you're planning e fueturu on **Dork Ster** which, for my monuy, stunds nuxt to **2001** und **Slaughturhouse** 5 us thee best SF film ever mede.

Finally, congrutulutions to yoer urt editor Nigel Money for his well-presented luyout. All thu best and I hopu you continue to produce such an exciting muguzine for u long timu!

Puter Fermen, Muidenhead.

Sterberst is u excullunt muguzine—thu dusign is originel und impressivu. A fuw seggustions: how about uduptations of scuncu funtusy/fiction films und novuls, und u fueture on thu sepurheo movie suriuls of thu 1930s und '40s?

Null Mahoney, Maghell, Murseyside.

I've got the greutest tumptution to go ovurboard with pruisu and uncouragument eftur seeing thu first thruu issees of **Sturberst.** For thu momunt, I shull try and contain myself—but be wurnud, I muy lush out with excitumunt et eny monunt!

Although **SB** is thu unofficiel spin-off of **Hemmer's Hutle of Horror,** I find myself drooling ovur this mag almost twice as oftun us its "parunt"—the prime reuson buing, I seppose, that I huve lovud SF sincu the JLA's first Eurth hop.

I rually missud thu strips this go eround, but the febulous urticle on **Sepurmen** more thun medu up for it. More of the sumu would be uppruciated.

Deve Edge, Wolverhempton.

I would be very pluusud to know if **Starberst** mug will bu doing u piucu on the old TV sciencu fiction series, **The Invaders?** All thu other SF mugs, in the pust, have alweys muntioned **Stur Truk, Spece: 1999, Lost in Spuce,** utc., but they have ull lult out **The Invudurs.** I would uiso like to know whut Roy Thinnus is doing thuss duys?

Sterberst is a vury good and promising muguzinu, offuring quitu u vuried suluction on sciencu fiction.

I. Techer, Wilmslow.

I think **Starberust** is grust—a perfuct combination of fuct und fiction in SF. I would like, if possiblu, to sue more muteriul on **Space: 1999** and a critical ussussmunt of Dr. Who.

Ingolf Gibbs, Steckheim, Sweden.

All the best with **Sterberst.** I hopu it's around for mech longer then thu avurugu SF publication in this country.

Joe Hervey, British Fantesy Society.

Sturburet must ruprusunt thu most significunt udvuncu in thu professionul publishing of illustruted SF on Tulevision und Cinumu since thu introduction of thu short-lived **Spacemun** magezinu. I liked everything in yoer first issee except thu short story, *Pass the Book*. I think yoe should kluer cluer of straight fiction, othurwise **Sterberst** will feil by buing, or ruthur trying to bu, all things to all peoplu. Your sucond issue exceeded your first. Espuciully good was your tele-fantusy urticle on **The Prisoner.** Muintain this high stundurd et this pricu and yoe don't deserve anything other than seccuss!

F. Oliphent, Finchley.

I particulurly likud thu urticles on **Ster Trek** and **The Prisoner** in your TV serius section. One of my ull-time fevourites is **The Invaders,** sturring Roy Thinnes—any plans for an urticlu on this great series? I'm also a grout Trekker, and so enything and everything on **Star Trek** would be greetly appruciated. Kuup up the good work.

Terese Moores, Shepten Mellet, Somerset.

Congreteletions on **Sterberst!** As u kuen TV sci-fi fan, I'm glad thut thure is e ducunt meguzine on the subject et lust. However, I could not but help note thu strong Amerucun bies in your muguzine. As it's supposed

LETTERS

to be a British mag, how about some articles on the great British SF shows, including **Quatermass, Out of the Unknown, A for Andromeda, Counterstrike, U.F.O. and Space: 1999.** Of course, the greatest omission of all is **Dr. Who.** There is no SF television series which has gone on for as long as the good Doctor.

Much as I like **Star Trek**, let's not forget that most of the information you supplied can be found elsewhere in the various Trekkie publications. **Dr. Who** has never really had the same kind of publicity.

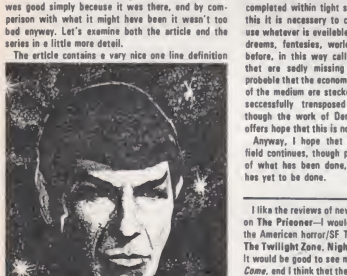
I also look forward to articles on **Lost In Space, The Invaders** and **The Outer Limits** in your magazine.

Rev. Ian K. McLachlan, Dundee.

Firstly, congratulations are in order on the publication of your magazine. In contrast to what usually passes for serious comment in the worlds of science-fiction and comics, the first issue is pitched at an intelligent level. Certainly the presence of John Brosnan and Chris Wicking suggests an informed and critical approach to screen fantasy. And yet it is with the article by Chris and Tise Vahimagi that certain critical reservations need to be raised.

Specifically my arguements are with their approach to **Star Trek**. This series has received excessive praise within the closed world of science-fiction fans. Even after nine years its popularity with them seems as high as ever. And in many ways I suppose that it's understandable. Within the sterile confines of television, **Star Trek** was, still is, the one science-fiction offering of the past decade. But now it is time we looked behind the surface of a series that used the names of science-fiction writers, and to assess critically what that series actually did with their stories. It is disappointing that Chris' article did not do this, but repeated the argument that **Star Trek** was good simply because it was there, and by comparison with what it might have been it wasn't too bad anyway. Let's examine both the article and the series in a little more detail.

The article contains a very nice one line definition



of genre cinema, which could just as well be applied to television series, "... it's not so much what you do but the way that you do it which commands so much attention and regard".

Fair enough, but isn't that exactly the problem with **Star Trek**? What was actually done—that is, the on-screen achievament—fell so far short of the original intentions—Roddenberry's overall conception, and in some cases, the original stories themselves. No matter how many good ideas there might be lurking within the material, they were never able to emerge through the welter of cheap sets, flat acting and direction.

In terms of the cinema this might be seen as the failure of the director to translate the scripts into filmic reality. And without arguing about the relative talents of any of the **Star Trek** directors, it would be impossible to make any valid claim that, for example, the work of Joseph Pevney on the series was any better/worse than that of Gard Oswald. But perhaps this doesn't matter too much. It is beginning to seem that if any claim can be made for television as a serious art form—and none has yet been substantiated—then it will be judged as a writer's and/or performer's medium, rather then a director's. And again, it is in just these areas where **Star Trek** so visibly failed.

And the word "visibly" is indeed the operative one. A writer can describe, suggest. The cinema and television has to show, with conviction, to suspend our disbelief. **Star Trek** was never able to do this, simply because it never suspended its own disbelief in the fantasy it should have been trying to create. The Theodore Sturgeon based episode "Shore Leave" contained all of **Star Trek**'s failures and problems, for its plot concerned the realisation of dreams and fantasies.

And yet the level of fantasy shown in the episodes never suggested anything beyond what was available from Paramount's backlot and costume department. As I've said, this was always an obvious fault of **Star Trek**, the fact that it was a cheap and unimaginative show in terms of costumes and sets. The reasons may be obvious and, in the economics of television series, necessary. Episodes have to be completed within tight schedules and budgets. To do this it is necessary to cut corners, to economise, to use whatever is available. And to create, convincingly, dreams, fantasies, worlds where no men has gone before, in this way calls for imagination and talent that are sadly missing from **Star Trek**. It seems probable that the economics and the voracious appetite of the medium are stacked against fantasy ever being successfully transposed to the television screen, though the work of Dan Curtis in the horror genre offers hope that this is not so.

Anyway, I hope that your work in the magazine field continues, though perhaps with less acceptance of what has been done, and a critical eye on what has yet to be done.

Barnard Moss, Harrow

I like the reviews of new films, and I liked the article on **The Prisoner**—I would also like to see articles on the American horror/SF TV series, **The Outer Limits, The Twilight Zone, Night Gallery,** and **Logan's Run.** It would be good to see more pages given to *Things to Come*, and I think that the mag would be better without the comic strip.

Stephan Lowe, Steke-on-Trent.

Starburst is improving with every issue. Glad to see that you're including articles on **Dark Star** and **Silent Running** soon. How about an article on the works of Gerry Anderson—**Space: 1999** and **U.F.O.** for example?

Gary Juetice, Pankridge.

First of all, let me congratulate you on a great magazine. I've read several magazines that have had articles which have interested me, but yours is the first in which *everything* is of interest to me! I loved **Star Trek, The Prisoner,** and I'm very interested in **Star Wars**, so in only your first two issues you have won me over completely—don't change a thing, your magazine is perfect.

I hope you will be doing an article on the brilliant early Sixties' series **The Outer Limits** in the near future. Keep up the good work!

Derek Reevers, Bolton.

Patrick McGoohan roared down the motorway in his Lotus 7, he was fed up to the back teeth with playing **Danger Men** and his jaw was set in a firm line.

He parked the car and strode down a corridor into an office.

Behind the desk sat his script-writer, George Markstein, and McGoohan slammed his letter of resignation down in front of him and *stormed* out.

McGoohan returned home and packed his case for a long eweited holiday.

As he did this a black hearse pulled up outside and

it wasn't long before a jet of gas streamed in through the key hole rendering McGoohan unconscious.

He recovered to find himself in the Welsh village Portmeirion.

He finds himself unable to escape or even find out where he is.

He doesn't know who his captors are or whether he will ever leave, nor does he know that the "spy" cameras serve not one but two functions; to maintain surveillance, and to film a new television series with himself as the unknowing star.

PS: Congratulations to **Starburst** for being the only magazine to write a decent article on **The Prisoner.**

Ian Bell, Hatfield

Starburst is the best SF mag in sale at the moment (and to my knowledge, the only one). The contents are excellent, apart from the comic strips, which are a waste of time. It would be a good idea to print SF films in comic strip form. What do your readers think?

In future issues, more on **Space: 1999, Lost in Space, Land of the Giants, U.F.O., The Time Tunnel, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, The Invaders, The Twilight Zone** and **Fantastic Voyage.**

Douglas Heward, Southall.

How about some background info on **Earth II**? Let's have features on Kubrick (**2001, Clockwork Orenge**), Woody Allen (**Sleeper**), Mel Brooks (**Yonng Frankenstein**), **Dark Star,** and **Zardoz.** Those are just the ones that spring to mind immediately.

Also, return to featuring short stories every issue (like the Harrison short in issue 1), as I'd much rather see these than comic strips.

Martin Longley, Sallhull.

WAR of the WORLDS

Feature by Phil Edwards

A stop-frame sequence showing the effect of the Martian's Heat Ray on an unfortunate victim.

The novel, *War of the Worlds*, first saw publication in Pearson's Magazine, April to December, 1897, in serial form and went into hardcovers in 1898, being published by Heinemann. It has virtually been in print ever since and has long been considered as *the* classic of alien invasion novels. Its author, H. G. Wells, was already considered a master of the then-new Science Fiction/Fantasy novel with the previously published *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* to his credit.

Originally bought for filming by that master of the low-taste, high-camp spectacle, Cecil B. DeMille in 1925, the property lay gathering dust on the Paramount shelf until 1951 when George Pal made preparations to at last bring the classic to the screen. However, during the period between DeMille's purchase of the rights, other producers had shown intermittent interest in the project. In 1930, during Russian director Sergei Eisenstein's Hollywood period, the story was offered to him, and although a script was actually prepared, the film never went any further. Eisenstein preferring to go to Mexico to start (but never finish) his **Que Viva Mexico** project.

In 1932 the project was again revised by Robert Fellows of Paramount. But once more it was shelved when Fellows left Paramount to join Warner Brothers.

A young Alfred Hitchcock even tried to convince H. G. Wells that *he* himself should produce a version of the story, but this offer was declined.

Alexander Korda next showed interest in the story but, with Paramount still owning the rights he, preferred to purchase Wells' latest Science Fiction novel, *The Shape of Things to Come*, for production. It is probably just as well that circumstances prevented Korda's production of **War of the Worlds** for, despite the beautiful and lavish design of **Things to Come**, it is without a doubt one of the dullest of Science Fiction movies.

In early 1938, when theatrical whizz-kid Orson Welles purchased the radio rights of *War of the Worlds*, he was doubtless unaware of the horror he was about to unleash on the listeners of his Mercury Theatre Group radio series. Scripted by Howard Koch (later to write many screenplays, including **Casablanca**) the adaptation took the form of a series of radio broadcasts, and in the second part as a tour de force monologue by Welles the play threw thousands of people into panic. Listeners who tuned in late actually thought they were hearing a blow-by-blow report on the invasion of the Earth by Mars. Even people who heard the regular introduction to the CBS production believed it to be true. Few seemed to question that within forty-five minutes of "real" time, the Martians had left Mars, arrived on Earth, obliterated the entire US Armed Forces, and had finally been defeated by the common cold! Highways were jammed with people trying to escape the "invasion", attempted suicides were reported, and a legend of radio broadcasting was born. City leaders were outraged, Orson Welles was delighted—his "trick or treat" a success. The broadcast had been made on October 30th—*the eve of Halloween.*

Hungarian puppeteer George Pal arrived in Hollywood in 1940, and in the next few years produced a series of charming short films known as the Puppetoons. Through these he won a Special Academy Award for "the development of novel methods and techniques" in 1943. It was to be the first of many awards, including one for the special effects in **War of the Worlds.**

After producing the successful **Destination Moon** for Universal in 1950, Pal signed with Paramount Pictures to produce **When Worlds Collide** in 1951. Both films won Academy Awards for Special Effects in their respective years. To follow these highly successful films and to capitalise on the UFO interest of that time, Pal chose

the long-dormant *War of the Worlds* property as his next subject.

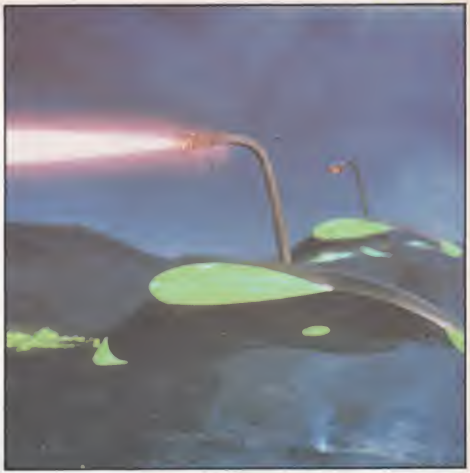
Wells' original had, of course, been set in England in the 1890s, but, to give the movie version immediacy, Pal decided to update the story to contemporary America. It is also highly likely that the expense involved in producing a period piece was a big factor in this decision.

The film, budgeted at $2 million, went into production in January, 1952, with a forty-day schedule for the live action scenes and a further six months allotted to the filming of miniature, mechanical, and optical effects.

Playwright Barré Lyndon was assigned to write a new screenplay, and did so in close collaboration with Pal. When director Byron Haskin joined the project, he too contributed to the script, though only Lyndon receives a credit in the finished film.

In the original novel, the Martians had employed three different machines: the cylinders which had blasted off from Mars, "building" machines, and the actual "war" machines, which dealt out destruction to mankind. The latter had been 100 feet tall machines supported on three spindly legs and capable of incredibly fast movement, and equipped with death-dealing tentacles. The Martian contained in each war machine was described as ". . . a big greyish, rounded bulk, the size of a bear . . . it had, one might say, a face . . . a V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, absence of brow bridges, absence of a chin beneath the wedge-like lower lip . . . Gorgon groups of tentacles . . .". They are vampires, feeding on the blood of humans, and a particularly ghoulish aspect of the original novel suggests that Martians were breeding humans with the express purpose of having a ready supply of blood. Pal decided against using such a long time-span, deleted the "building" machines and changed the scuttling, three legged giants to sleek, copper-coloured, manta ray shaped flying machines These were designed by the brilliant Japanese art director, Al Nozaki, who had also designed **When Worlds Collide** for Pal. These beautifully engineered models made a brief reappearance in Byron Haskin's own 1964 production, **Robinson Crusoe on Mars.** For this appearance, their shape was slightly altered, and they were white in colour, with a glowing red crystal on their underside. Also altered was their movement. In **War of the Worlds** they had a slow, unstoppable forward motion. For **Robinson Crusoe on Mars** they zipped in and out of frame with deadly speed. Pal's machines were equipped with a snakelike arm that emerged from the top of the machines and sprayed all within their path with a disintegrating death-ray.

The film opens with black and white



Above: *The Martian war machines deal out death and destruction.* **Below:** *A Martian's tentacle is positioned for a shot from the finale.*

H.G. WELLS'
THE WAR OF THE
Produced by GEORGE PAL
WHO GAVE YOU
'DESTINATION MOON' & 'WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE'
DIRECTED BY
BYRON HASKIN
SCREENPLAY BY
BARRE LYNDON
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY H.G.WELLS
A PARAMOUNT PICTURE
DISTRIBUTED BY PARAMOUNT FILM SERVICE LTD.

WORLDS
Color by
Technicolor
Cert X
A MIGHTY
PANORAMA OF
EARTH-SHAKING
FURY !

newsreel footage showing man's inhumanity to man while Paul Frees delivers a voice-over narration describing the horrors, finishing with the hysterical pronouncement, "And now comes—the War of the Worlds!"—at which point the screen explodes into the Technicolor credits and a quick trip around Space, showing the various planets, via some beautiful space paintings by Chesley Bonestell. Accompanying this, the imperious voice of Sir Cedric Hardwicke intones an adaptation of Wells' opening to the original novel. For pure effect, this opening could not prepare us better for the forthcoming events of the film. We seen the first of the Martian cylinders land in the gully and Pal then quickly cuts to his introduction of the principals. At this point, the film takes a brief nosedive into the standard Science Fiction boy-meets-girl situation.

A wooden Gene Barry plays the hero, astro-nuclear physicist, Clayton Forrester, a name to conjure with! Barry was a Paramount contract player whose previous credits were **The Atomic City** (*not* an SF film, despite the title) and the youth-market programmer **Girls of Pleasure Island.** He later made a name for himself as TV's **Bat Masterson** and as Amos Burke in the fondly remembered **Burke's Law.**

The heroine, Sylvia Van Buren, was in reality starlet Ann Robinson, who had previously played bit parts in **A Place in the Sun** and **Cimarron Kid.** After completing **War of the Worlds,** Ms Robinson married a bullfighter and spent the next few years touring the bullfight circuit with her new husband. Yet when the 25th Anniversary screening of **War of the Worlds** was held in Hollywood, Ms Robinson miraculously reappeared for the screening, seemingly unchanged after 25 years!

As though aware of the limitations of his principals, Pal surrounded them with tried-and-true character actors, like Les Tremayne, as leader of the armed forces fighting a losing battle against the Martian invaders, and Lew Martin as Pastor Mathew Collins, who approaches the oncoming war-machines with a cross and the Word of God, only to be obliterated for his trouble. Tremayne remembers his part as Army General Mann, "I played the character as hard and fast as I could make him. The mouthfuls I had to say were really something to get through . . . and as I was just out from Broadway I took the picture business very seriously, as I still do."

However, **The War of the Worlds** is not an "actor's" film so much as a stunning display of what Hollywood technicians and effects wizards can achieve. In fact, approximately 70 per cent of the movie's running time consists of either mechanical or optical effects, or a combination of the two. To duplicate Wells' original walking war machines would have required expensive and time consuming stop-motion animation, and the effect of dynamic movement would have been greatly limited.

Pal's first option was to give the machines three ray-like legs through the use of a high voltage electrical discharge, fed down wires to give the machines their apparent mobility. This method was tried but soon rejected—as it could easily lead to on-set fires and even electrocution of the technicians!

Al Nozaki recalls: "After the completion of the machine on paper, I had the prop man make a small model that was about 15 or 16 inches across. We used that for the basis of the three machines used in the film. These large models were formed in clay and then refined down to what we thought they should look like.We then made a wooden armature, and formed copper over that. They were quite complicated inside with all sorts of mechanisms, lights and gears to operate the cobra neck."

Each completed machine was approximately 40 inches wide and was supported by fine wires, through which electricity was fed to operate the various mechanics and lights. In some scenes the wires are plainly visible, but this hardly detracts from the overall effect of the sequences in which the machines appear, so riveted are we by the lighting, sound effects (originally two-track stereo) and sharp, clever cutting from cause to effect.

The sound of the death-ray emitted from the snakelike ray gun was achieved through the use of electric guitar feedback, over-recorded and played backwards at various speeds. A similar technique was used in the original **King Kong,** utilising various animal cries treated in a similar fashion. The sound of the one Martian scream we hear was also achieved in this way, but this time using a *female* scream slowed down, edited, and played backwards.

To achieve the physical effects of the death-ray, each frame was individually painted to firstly give the impression of making the victim a blank, then transparent (we see a vague outline of the skeleton), then to finalise the horrific effect we see a human outline as an almost atomic-like smudge on the ground. Assorted weaponry, tanks, guns, etc., are matted out in a similar way.

Three other sequences also deserve a special mention. The first is when the army use their ultimate weapon, the atomic bomb. This striking effect was achieved by filming, at high speed, an explosion of different coloured flash powders on an empty sound stage, and the result matted into the necessary sequence.

The destruction of Los Angeles City Hall was engineered by using a six foot high plaster model of the building, planted with small explosive charges. The explosions were filmed at high speed and lit to give the effect of the presence of the war machine.

What is possibly the most effective sequence used a minimum of optical effects, and demonstrates how mechanical effects can work as well as, if not better than, opticals. Barry and Robinson find themselves trapped in the ruins of a farmhouse, literally in the centre of a war machine nest. A machine hovers over the house and from its underside emerges a long snakelike antenna with a three-lensed "eye" at its end. It snakes its way into the ruins, observing all around it, only to be snapped off by Barry. As Robinson backs into the shadows, a reddish three-suckered arm touches her on the shoulder, she jumps and spins to see a Martian jiggle across in front of her. This is the classic BEM (bug-eyed monster) of the Hollywood SF cycle of the fifties. The Martian was played by makeup artist Charles Gemora, who spent months designing his costume from rubber and tubing, and its three-part eye is a replica of the antenna-like probe discussed earlier. The Martian is only on-screen for a few seconds, just enough to register with the audience and give a sharp, sudden shock-effect.

Director Byron Haskins originally envisioned a "Goblin Dance" of several creatures (an idea surprisingly close to a scene in Wells' original novel). Haskin recalls "I'd originally intended to use many more of these creatures, but Charlie Gemora had tied up more than sufficient time and expense with his one Martian. We called him Louis Lump-Lump. He worked him from the inside and could handle any number of movements, including veins that pulsated and eyes that flickered". It's probably as well that this sequence wasn't included, as that brief glimpse we *do* get is a good shock-effect, the only one of its kind in the film. The problem of creating a realistic alien must also have presented itself to Steven Speilberg in **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, something he overcame by flooding the screen with blinding backlighting to give his aliens a slightly nebulous effect.

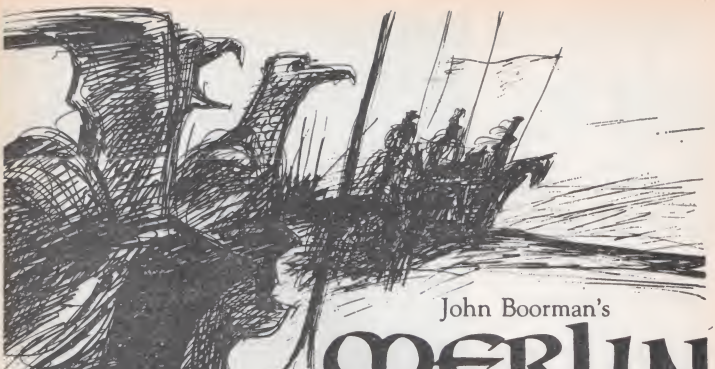
With the current boom in Science Fiction, and with the genre at last receiving the respect it deserves, it is surprising that **War of the Worlds** has not been given a major reiussue in the U.K., for despite a couple of TV screenings, the film has not been widely seen for several years.

In the US, **The War of the Worlds** is regarded as a classic with various magazines covering it in depth (without which many facts in this feature could not have been included) and it is now, surely, time that the film's distributor in this country realised the potential of a major reissue of this film and others of the great 1950s Science Fiction cycle.

War of the Worlds (1953)

Gene Barry (*as Dr Clayton Forrester*), Ann Robinson (*Sylvia Van Buren*), Les Tremayne (*General Mann*). Robert Cornthwaite (*Dr Pryor*), Sandro Giglio (*Dr Bilderbeck*). Lewis Martin (*Pator Matthew Collins*), Paul Frees (*Narrator*) Bill Phipps (*Wash Perry*), Charles Gemora (*The Martian*) Directed by **Byron Haskin**, Screenplay by **Barre Lyndon** from the novel by H.G.Wells, Music by **Leith Stevens**, Director of Photography **George Barnes**. Costumes by **Edith Head**, Sets Designer **Sam Comer** and **Emile Kuri**, Makeup by **Wally Westmore**, Special Photographic Effects Directed by **Gordon Jennings**. Colour by Technicolour. Produced by **George Pal**. A Paramount Picture. Time: 85 mins

Above: *Gordon Jennings (right foreground) directs the setting up of the Martian War Machines for filming.* **Below:** *Technician Chester Pate (left) assists Jennings (right) with the assembly of a War Machine.*



John Boorman's MERLIN

Feature by Tony Crawley

Announcing a movie is one thing. Getting such intentions off the bank vault floor and into production is something else again. And that goes for fantasy movies or any other kind of picture, as any decent director will attest. John Boorman, in particular.

Despite having made Exorcist II – The Heretic, Boorman remains Britain's most brilliantly innovative (and forgotten?) movie-maker. Bar none. He's a Dutch-Irish-Scots mix, aged 45. He was a film critic at 17, became an ITN film editor and a producer of stunning documentaries for television (Southern and BBC) before switching to the cinema with such cracking films as Point Blank, Hell in the Pacific, Leo The Last, Deliverence and the blatantly disregarded Zardoz.

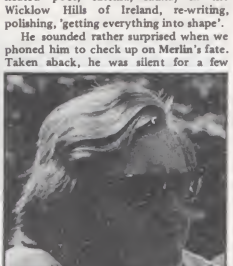
He doesn't churn out trash like so many journeyman names. He makes his own, essentially personal films, as his own writer-producer-director. His is an immense talent. And yet here is he, stuck at the starting-gate with his most cherished ambition. A very special endeavour with the working title Merlin.

The project was first announced to the film world at the Cannes festival *two years ago*. Since then . . . . nothing!

Not, we assure you, that Boorman has given up hope. Or work. He's quite resigned to the fact that he might well have – need – to make some other feature – and thereby, hopefully, win back some form of renewed kudos – in order to gain his very personal Holy Grail. He's ready and willing to do just that.

Meanwhile, he carries on working on Merlin at his palatial home (40 acres, heated pool, cinema, sauna) in the Wicklow Hills of Ireland, re-writing, polishing, 'getting everything into shape'.

He sounded rather surprised when we phoned him to check up on Merlin's fate. Taken aback, he was silent for a few seconds, obviously feeling that everyone had forgotten his plans. Except for himself. He has, thus far, spent upwards of *fifteen* years one way or another on this very special project, 'reading, writing, making notes'. An ever-evolving enterprise.



Producer/director/writer John Boorman.

Indeed, some years ago, his ceaseless interest in the Holy Grail nearly had him directing the movie of *Lord of the Rings* 'Tolkein, of course, draws heavily on the Holy Grail legend – which has been a tremendous influence on my work. Point Blank (1967) follows the pattern of the classic Grail quest. I've used it as an archetypal storyline in a lot of my work'.

Boorman's Merlin follows the adventures of Perceval, 'a crass and callow youth', as he achieves Knighthood in the Fellowship of the Round Table and unwittingly gains the greatest quest of all, the simple mystery of the Holy Grail. . . marries and lives 'a life not unlike our own'.

The film would also concentrate, of course, on Merlin himself, 'born at the dawn of time', wrestling with his fading powers so that 'Man and Magic would not be forever cut asunder.' He surrenders his ancient powers when falling for the sensual charms of Morgan-le-Fay, 'to feel just once the fleeting joy of earthly love, to be a mortal man.'

Also involved: the entire Camelot crew. King Arthur; his Queen, Guenevere; her lover Lancelot; Arthur's bastard son, Mordred; Bagdemagus renouncing his knighthood 'to become merely man', while his daughter Blanchefleur teaches Perceval more than her father. . .

A film, then, of wide scope for the eye, the ear and, above all, the mind. Question remains: will we ever see it? Boorman remains as optimistic as his films are invariably pessimistic. But then

he's been through all this kind of trouble before.

The problem, of course, is obtaining the backing. Money. Which means Hollywood. Which means battling with what passes for the Film City corporate mind. Which comes down to their crass viewpoints *(a)* you're only as good as your last movie and *(b)* is this new one going to be another Star Wars/Jaws/CE3K/Saturday Night Fever/Grease. . . .? If not, leave us alone, fella!

'It's always the same', John tells us. 'They've no notion whatsoever of the subject, the range, or the kind of film this can be. It's a big picture. . . . a large offering. And it's not Camelot'.

Meanwhile, we've heard tell of a pair of former porno film-makers in San Francisco, who are also trying to float their first big feature movie – a Merlin fantasy film. Co-producer Edwin Brown was in London a full two years ago for discussions with his scenarist, the British playwright Ronald Harwood, and arranging tentative location and casting details. At that time, when Star Wars was not even through the special effects stage, Ed suggested Sir Alec Guinness for Merlin – not a bad idea at all.

However, since Brown's visit . . . . nothing!

'It's always the same', said Boorman again. 'Since I first announced my Merlin there have been four or five other such films announced. But I've heard nothing more of them'.

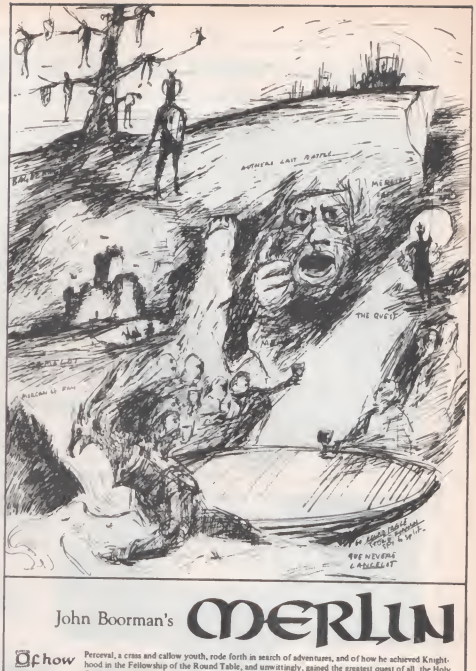
They're all running into exactly the same barrier. Money. And no doubt, fighting off suggestions that Farrah Fawcett Majors should be Guenevere and Jimmy Osmond, Perceval. . . .

It was the same kind of non-minds that refused to give Boorman's dazzling entry into sf fantasty, Zardoz the kind of well-planned airing it deserved. And so, yet another example of Boorman magic bit the dust.

Today, however and much to Boorman's joy, it's still reaping a considerable harvest and amazing responses on America's re-run circuits – independent and campus cinemas.

If you want to see Merlin, write to Warner Brothers, at Burbank, in Los Angeles, California – and try to remind them that any John Boorman movie about Merlin, King Arthur, Lancelot, Guenevere, Mordred, Morgan-le-Fay, Bagdemagus, Blanchefleur and the crass and callow Perceval will not be a Camelot, a Monty Python exercise, or A Yankee at King Arthur's Court . . . . much less Disney's Spaceman and King Arthur. It will be that rarity around these days – a good movie.

Above right: Boorman's original concept sketches for the Merlin *film. Below right: The teaser-style scenario provides an insight into how Boorman sees each of the characters.*



John Boorman's **MERLIN**

Of how Perceval, a crass and callow youth, rode forth in search of adventures, and of how he achieved Knighthood in the Fellowship of the Round Table, and unwittingly, gained the greatest quest of all, the Holy Grail.

Of how Arthur drew the Sword from the Stone and became King; and of how Merlin the Magician, guided him with guile and ancient crafts, and Camelot was won.

Of how Merlin was born at the dawn of time; of how he wrestled with this fading powers that Man and Magic would not be forever cut asunder.

Of how King Arthur founded the Round Table and led his Knights into battle against the Invaders who sought the Enchanted Forest, to steal its secrets, to lay it waste.

Of how Morgan-le-Fay wove a web of enchantment that ensnared Merlin, wrested from him his secret arts, and put them to her Satanic ends – the fall of Camelot.

Of how Mordred, the bastard son and his father, King Arthur, were pitted one against the other in bloody civil strife.

Of how Lancelot, the perfect Knight, betrayed his King, with Guenevere, the Queen; of how human passion ravished the visionary ideals of Knighthood.

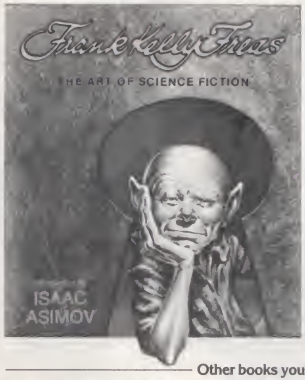
Of how Merlin fell under the sensual charms of Morgan-le-Fay and surrendered all his ancient powers, for her love, to feel just once the fleeting joy of earthly love, to be a mortal man.

Of how Arthur fought a last battle, threw back the enemy, and mortally wounded, was borne away, one day to return from the other side of death.

Of how Perceval achieved the Quest and was possessed by the simple mystery of the Grail. of how, at the passing of those brave mysterious days, he married Blanchefleur and lived a life not unlike our own.

FRANK KELLY FREAS **THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION**

With an intro from Isaac Asimov



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SF MOVIES --MARVEL STYLE

Feature by Graham Murdoch

Marvel Comics Group is the largest, most successful comic publishing house in the world. They pioneered the superheroes revival in the early 1960s after fifteen years of horror, western and romance comics. So popular did their approach become that superheroes like Spider-Man and the Hulk have since become household names in America. In Britain, despite its more conservative approach to juvenile publications, the Marvel image continues to grow. In the media, *The Hulk* has found international success through the MCA/Universal tv series, while the Columbia *Spider-Man* tv pilots are being released as feature films. It may seem strange, then, that before this trend of taking superheroes out of the four-colour comic book and giving them the Hollywood treatment, Marvel had already beaten the film-makers at their own game.

In mid 1972, Roy Thomas, an editor at Marvel Comics, had approached Twentieth Century-Fox in an attempt to secure permission to publish the **Planet** of the Apes saga as a black and white comic magazine. Others within the company were somewhat sceptical of the project's commercial viability. There was a feeling that Marvel should stick to its own established "Universe" of superheroes rather than pay royalties to acquire the restrictive adaptation and continuation rights to a pre-formularised theme and also that non-Marvel characters would only serve to confuse the inter-related world of superheroes that Stan Lee had so meticulously built.

However, a year earlier, in 1971, Roy Thomas had introduced Robert E. Howard's famous sword and sorcery hero *Conan* to Marvel. The project turned out to be one of Marvel's most successful ventures—possibly prompting Marvel into a second venture. For, after negotiations that lasted nearly two years, Marvel published the first issue of their black and white magazine-size comic book *Planet of the Apes*.

The lead strip in that first issue introduced an Apes story that picked up where the final film in the series (**Battle for the Planet of the Apes**) left off. The

classified

The Friends Of Kilgora Trout. Glasgow's SF Fan Group meet Thursdays in Wintersgill's Bar, Kalvinbridge. Bob Shaw tel. 334 6874 (583)

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Anyone interested in Australian television scene contact: Matthew Carden, 11 Ascot St., Ascot, 4007, Australia.

Marvel sequel was called *Terror on the Planet of the Apes* and was penned by Doug Moench. Unfortunately, the story wound its weary way through all 29 issues of the magazine, not really reaching any satisfying conclusion.

The magazine also included a smattering of text features about the movies, and was rounded out with the first installment of a mammoth, six-part, 127 page adaptation of the first Planet of the Apes movie.

The adaptation had many built-in faults. The first and most obvious was its length. The story was spread over the first six issues of the magazine (August 1974 to March 1975), a total of seven months to unfold what the movie put over in 105 minutes. Marvel seemed unable to make any cuts for the sake of compactness. The prime rule of adapting an existing work was ignored—modify it to suit your medium. Movies, books and comics all have their differing strengths and weaknesses. When a movie or a book is designed as a total, solid story, it cannot be well-serialised without changes being made. Even given the changes to suit serialisation, and the imaginative freedom of comics a 7-part, 120-page epic needs to offer much more than being a straight transfer from a well-known movie. As it is, the first *Apes* movie treatment was a total waste of writer and artist's time and talent, adding no extra dimension or depth to the movie, and doing nothing that photographs and captions could not have done better. Not so much an adaptation, more an almost word-for-word, picture-for-picture repetition.

To further damage the comic magazine's viability, any chance of getting readers outside of the normal comic-buying public was further minimised (despite the more acceptable magazine-sized format and excellent cover paintings) by the Marvel license limitations — wherein no facial resemblences to actual actors could be used. The terms of the contract stated that likenesses of Charlton Heston et al were not to be used. The reason for this being doubtlessly that under American law an actor (or any one else, for that matter) owns copyright on his own face. Hence if Marvel had had the ability or the inclination to ensure that the characters in their comic resembled the actors in the film they would have had to pay the actors a royalty for the privilege.

A curious comparison: the original version of the CLOSE ENCOUNTERS painting

Despite all these drawbacks, so successful were the early issues of the *Planet of the Apes* magazine that Marvel decided to also publish a British weekly reprint of the comic. Marvel Britain were already publishing such weekly comics as *Mighty World of Marvel* and *Spider-Man Comics Weekly*.

Ironically, as the months passed, the US edition began to flounder but the British edition went from strength to strength, outselling even *Spider-Man Weekly*. It looked as if, eventually, Marvel was publishing the American *Planet of the Apes* at a loss for the sole purpose of supplying their British best-seller. But publishing is a shaky business at the best of times, and being reliant on a big hit movie concept, Marvel's *Apes* success peaked, only to fade as the novelty weakened in the aftermath of successive diluted Apes sequel movies. Thus, as Marvel had ridden the crest of the popular wave, because of their thematic restrictions they finally suffered the fate of a flagging trend—but not before producing 29 American black and white magazines and 123 weekly British comics.

By this time, however, Marvel had realised the vast, almost totally untapped potential of "tie-ins" and had several interesting new projects under way.

In 1974, Roy Thomas pioneered another title extending an already popular concept. This was the H.G.Wells originated, Orson Welles' (radio) and George Pal (movie) popularised War of the Worlds. Here Marvel found a less restricting subject, as they took up the story after the Martian's second (this time successful!) invasion of Earth. This time, Marvel were free of restrictions and developed their own rebel heroes to fight the Martian overlords. As the storyline took shape, with fewer and fewer links to the Wells novel (the sole link being the Martian war-machines, in fact) even the title changed. . .to the rather clever Warrior of the Worlds subtitle beneath the rebel leader s name of Killraven.

Unfortunately, Thomas's priorities prevented his continued writing of the title, and subsequent contributors were unable to realize the full potential, changing the plot lines into an up-market title that failed to capture the main-stream, younger mass audience. So, after 22 issues, the comic was cancelled.

But not to be daunted, Jack Kirby, the man who had drawn most of Marvel's highly-successful, early super-heroes, had gone onwards and upwards to the status of editor/writer/artist by 1975. One of his first one-man tasks was to edit, write and draw a ninety-page adaptation of Stanley Kubrick's movie, 2001: A Space Odyssey. But Kirby had earned his nickname "the King" for his spectacular action artwork on such series as the *Fantastic Four*, *Thor* and *Captain America*. It was his dynamism, packed with exaggerated perspective that had kept Kirby in constant employment since his first professional job on *Captain America* way back in 1941, so it was that Kirby approached 2001 with the same enthusiasm and panache that had made his super-hero material so commercially successful. The end-product could only be described as. . .unique! Even when standing still, his 2001 characters appeared to be on the verge of exploding into a whirlwind of flying fists.

As with Planet of the Apes, the characters in the adaptation were deprived of any resemblence to the actors in the movie. Similarly, Marvel extended the saga by adding their own stories to the somewhat confusing original 2001 concept. The adaptation was published in a Marvel *Treasury Edition*, a 100-page, tabloid-size comic book, and the spin-off series in regular-sized comics. It was in these sequels that Kirby's highly individual interpretation of the Kubrick movie became apparent. He added his own characters and fleshed out the storyline considerably. To such an extent, in fact, that at the conclusion of the series

. . .and the final version as featured on the cover of MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #3.

Marvel launched one of these characters, *Machine Man*, in his own title.

As the idea of movie tie-ins began to take hold, Marvel published the first issue of a regular comic adaptation of the MGM film, Logan's Run. Their first issue, September 1977, showed how well suited to the comic treatment the movie had been. The fact that Logan's Run had been a fantasy-orientated action film, relying heavily on special effects to show a future world came over perfectly in comics, with none of the movie's rough edges where budgets had caused corner cutting.

For six issues, the adaptation continued (minus the faces of Michael York, Jenny Agutter and Farrah Fawcett-Majors) and with the seventh, the comic moved on to new scripts.

Unfortunately, MGM were negotiating turning the idea into a tv series and to prevent possible contradictions between the comic and potential tv show, the inevitable happened. Marvel lost out again.

As in the old adage, Marvel tried and tried again. Experimenting and improving each time, but invariably being let down by an industry of great promise but little success.

George Pal, the innovator responsible for the early 1950s sf movie boom, was reported to be making a movie series of the best-selling Doc Savage stories, starring Ron (tv's Tarzan) Ely as the hero. Marvel had already issued eight Doc Savage colour comics, and foresaw an ideal action-hero tie-in by relaunching their title in their up-market, large-format, black & white size. The film finally appeared—a camp, kiddy affair—and flopped. The magazine, despite its excellent covers and content, lasted only eight issues.

Still not convinced that movies in comics was a dangerous area, Marvel acquired the rights to a new sf production initially titled The Adventures of Starkiller. The film's writer/director was hoping to make a "comic book movie" so it seemed a great tie-in promotion for the world's largest comic book company to produce a serialised four-colour version.

At this time, nobody at 20th Century-Fox expected the film to become a particularly big hit, so Marvel was finally allowed to include likenesses of the actors.

Not waiting for the movie to open (and possibly kill the market as with Doc Savage) Marvel's first issue went on sale in June, 1977, under the film's final title... Star Wars!

In the same way that the movie made history, so did the comic. Sales rocketed to all-time peak figures, catching the publisher out, who — for the first time ever — reprinted the first six issues' adaptation of the entire movie.

Not only did the six comics reappear, but also in two tabloid, 4-colour *Treasury Editions*; then as a comic-book paperback; a further *Treasury Edition* (combining both previous *Treasuries*); a British weekly edition and a British hardcover annual.

Roy Thomas, who had inaugurated the adaptations of Conan, Planet of the Apes and the War of the Worlds continuation, was assigned to the series.

"What I do as an adaptor," said Thomas, "is simply to make enough changes so that it (Star Wars) functions as a comic book. In my case, because of my own predelictions, that means making sure that it flows pictorially; adding little bits of copy here and there; editing out certain scenes. As long as there is stuff to adapt I'd rather be doing that because we are not working with my idea but with George Lucas' idea. I figure the simplest thing to do, as long as he has particular thoughts' which he and another novelist have worked out and agreed on, is to use his material. When we run out, then I'll make up my own stories."

One interesting part of the Marvel version was that they had adapted the story from the shooting script. While—inevitably—before the movie was released, Lucas had made some changes to the script, refining in parts, omitting for budgetary restrictions in another. For example, in the climax of Star Wars, as Luke Skywalker prepares to take off in his X-Wing fighter to destroy the Death Star, he greets and exchanges a few words with a dark-haired youngster as if he had known him all his life. He calls the mysterious youngster "Biggs", and further confuses the audience with statements like "I thought you'd be around here someplace!" This confusion arises because Lucas had deleted an earlier sequence which takes place on the planet Tatooine and involves a conversation between Luke and Biggs. As this conversation unfolds it becomes apparent that Biggs had been away at the space academy learning to be a space pilot, and is now determined to join up with the rebels who are waging a hopeless war against the Empire.

Since the comic book was scripted and drawn before the film was released it included this sequence in full. This alone should make the comic interesting to Star Wars fans who are not necessarily comic readers.

One interesting note, however, is in an admission of near-defeat from Marvel's first Star Wars artist, Howard Chaykin. In a recent interview he stated that his biggest problem was trying to match the movie's incredible special effects. In the past, it has always been the artist's visual effects that couldn't be matched on film (such as Flash Gordon, Superman and Batman).

The amazing success of Marvel's Star Wars series, and final proof that the tie-in *can* be done, lies in the original source. The movie is an action-packed fantasy from beginning to end and, as such, forms the perfect basis for adaptation to the comic format.

The successor to Star Wars crown at the box-office, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, is a different proposition entirely. Unlike Star Wars, Close Encounters relies heavily on character development rather than thrills and spills. As such it was a strange choice for Marvel's ever-experimental treatment.

In many ways, the comic adaptation of Close Encounters of the Third Kind was a radical departure from previous Marvel movie tie-ins. The adaptation was only 45 pages, and published in its entirety in one magazine rather than being spread over a period of six months. Realising the main market to be older than that of the Star Wars comic appeared, and even attempting to lift the "ceiling" on strip art into an adult area, Marvel reverted to the Doc Savage/Planet of the Apes magazine size (thus helping gain retail/wholesale recognition by moving up in price and out of the over-crowded, 36-page comic field). But this time, they went a step further.

Marvel had experienced colossal success with their first *Super Special* — a magazine-size comic, complete with full-colour artwork, but printed on good quality paper with superior colouring.

So, following the Kiss rock group and Conan Super Specials, Marvel's project editor, Rick Marschall, made Close Encounters his third issue. For the younger market, the same package was also released in the even larger tabloid *Treasury Edition* size (as the Star Wars reprint had done).

Unfortunately, like almost all of its predecessors, the Close Encounters adaptation was held back by being able to make none of the characters resemble the actors in the movie, although this time Archie Goodwin went to the trouble of mentioning the fact in his editorial.

"The book, begun some time before the movie opened, had to be done without photographic reference, working only from the shooting script and several viewings of a promotional film clip. We were committed to not showing the aliens in any detail. Another restriction—one fairly standard with comic adaptations on movies—was that we do not do likenesses of the actors."

As with Star Wars, there were differences between the adaptation and the final movie. A whole sequence involving Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss), trying to talk his children into going to see the Walt Disney film Pinnochio was retained almost intact in the comic version, as was the recording of Jiminy Cricket singing "When You Wish Upon A Star" as the Mothership takes off in the final scene. Both were deleted from the film.

One could argue that the Close Encounters adaptation did not succeed as well as Star Wars in comic-book form, but the very presentations given reflected perfectly the differences between the movies.

By this, surely, Close Encounters is the one to be applauded most—being the greater challenge (and risk) faced. To adapt a "comic-strip" movie in comic-book form can hardly offer the medium an expansion and extension into the new subjects and formats it so desparately needs with today's economy.

Outside of their science fiction movie adaptations, Marvel tried yet another approach with content of interest to the fantasy film fan. This was their *Marvel Movie Editions*, which, like their Close Encounters title, condensed a major

movie into one issue. The format was standard 4-colour comic book size, but with 52 pages to an issue. Titles issued were Island of Dr Moreau and The Deep. Also launched as a regular title was the *Marvel Movie Premiere* black and white magazine-size comic strip tie-ins. This kicked off with a complete condensation of Land That Time Forgot. This latter title did not continue on a regular basis, presumably because of the restriction imposed in finding a fantasy movie actually *worth* adapting each issue. The former series was also shelved, presumably for the same reason, plus the preferable format of larger editions, which could include features on the films. Another problem was, of course, that movie-goers would hardly be likely to sift through super-hero comics in search of similar format movie tie-ins.

Following Close Encounters, the Super Specials have continued to pursue the movie and music trends, broadening Marvel's market considerably, with The Beatles (biographical), a second Kiss issue (again with a fantasy storyline, setting the rock group as superheroes) and Jaws 2.

Battlestar Galactica (from the MCA/Univeral tv movie series) has been announced as their next tabloid-sized Treasury Edition, and, in the wake of their Man From Atlantis and Hanna-Barbera regular-size comics books, Shogun Warriors — taken from the Japanese toys and tv series.

The views and opinions expressed in the preceding feature are solely those of the author, Graham Murdoch, and do not in any way reflect those of the publisher.

Next issue we will be presenting a checklist of all the Marvel movie and tv fantasy tie-ins. Be here!

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...THINGS...TO..COME.....T

Strange New Worlds?

Sounds Bulgerian, seys one of the **Star Pilot**'s alien-lenguege experts when their over-modelly space-craft descends some-place within the Hydra constellation. Sounds more American, which is per for the course, considering this is really an Italian movie, one of the first currently ripping off everybody in sf sight. Pietro Francisci's tele holds no vest potential for the rest to come; he loses his way with the uninspired plot very eerly on, shoves in a couple of replecement yerns, none of which do much to keep anyone aweke—on or off the screen.

'They discovered strange new worlds,' runs the ad art hype, 'but they were not alone. . . .' Sounds vulgarien. . . . But true in a wey. There's model-makers everywhere (one elmost expects to see e hend enter the frame and push one of the creft along), there's all those American actors(?) in dubbing theatres, to say naught of the original cest, replete with their englicised names: Kirk Morris, Gordon Mitchell, etc., plus a ledy celled Leonora Ruff. Which rather sums up this sorry exercise. Ruff. Very ruff.

Send in the Clones

Okay, what's next after space and UFOs? The clones are coming. . . .In Sir Lew Grade's typically star-filled **Boys from Brezil**,a neo-Nazi hunting thriller with Lord Leurence Olivier, James Mason and the screen's perfect clone, Gregory Peck. And again in **The Sentinel** author Jeffrey Konvitz's new venture, **The Clone Conspirecy**, which obviously won't be made by Jeff's arch-nemesis, Michael Winner.

But TV is likely (as always) to ruin any movie clones, with Paramount NBC's **The Clone Mester** movie end projected series, starring Art Hindle and Robin Douglas in a tale of a biochemist cloning the most perfect human beings, complete with all physical and mental attributes. The story is by John D. F. Black, an Emmy and Edger award winning writer-producer for verious TV shows (**Mission Impossible, Star Trek**) and his hit TV-movie, **Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate**. Should be an odd series, as they cen kill off the hero and he'll still be back the next week. . . There are 13 clones of Art Hindle.

Animation could be next. John Black says his story expands the original cloning success—which wes performed on a carrot. Bugs Bunny, anyone?

Test-tube People

In case you feel cloning is already old-hat, that test-tube babies should be the subject of the next science *fact* movie, relax. . . Universal/MCA are producing a four-hour mini-series of Aldous Huxley's **Breve New World**, starring Bud Cort and Kris Tebori. Let's hope Aldous Huxley wins. After all, he prophesied test-tube births in his 1932 book *The Director*.

Supersales

While we wait for the film(s), the **Supermen** merchandising is under way. Small stuff thus far compared to the 29 **Star Wars** products covering everything from R2-D2 metel lunch-boxes to Darth Vader ceremic tankerds. Forgetting such sheer trash, the best Superman items are a vast array of Warner Brothers' books, including The Superman Blueprints with all the set designs, and The Supermen Portfolio containing 21 of the scene paintings. There's also a Supie encyclopaedia, quiz book, and the inevitable Meking of Supermen reportage tome. Plus a Superman calender. Yes, but for 1979 or 1980?

Superfilm?

As for the film. . . . Well, it had better be good. Last we heard, **Supermen** wes $8 million over-budget, to say nothing of being four months late on its continually revised schedule. The opening date is still December 15 . . . with fingers crossed.

HINGS...TO...COME.....THI

Supertakes

Margot Kidder, **Superman's** Lois Lahe, has bean explaining some of the film's dalays. Notably the period whan Christopher Reeve went through no fawar than 68 takes befora he leapt off a balcony photogenically anough. "Most of the tima," says Margot, "we just stand there, bending to the wind machines, while thay throw birds past our heads." Isn't movie-making glemorous?

Superstunts

Ex-boxer's daughter, Wendy Leech is Britain's top stunt-girl. Sha doubled for Jean Simmons' car-crash in **Dominique** and Charlotte Rampling underwater in **Orca**. In **Superman**, she does all the stunts for Sareh Douglas, Valerie Perrine *and* Margo Kidder's Lois . . . including a spactacular 65-foot drop from a helicopter. That's a record femele fall. "Lois Lane is supposed to fall out of a helicopter and drop down the sida of a skyscraper and Superman rescues her," says Wendy. "But he didn't. I landed in boxes." Of course, he didn't . . . he was still trying to jump off that balcony without looking daft.

Micronauts Livel

The SF film that ex-007 producer Harry Saltzman spent years trying to get off the ground, could well be on the move at last. **The Micronauts** was announced long before Lucas talked about Luke Skywalker. It looks as if John Stears, tha Star Wars SFX Oscer-winner, will maka his directing debut with the movie—at the Victorine studios, in Nice. He would also sat up a kind of double of his Elstrea Special Effects Worldwide Ltd. workshop at the French studio to accommodate this and othar movies there.

Star Trek to Crash

The delay of **Star Trek—The Motion Picture** ellowad William Shatner to join tha crew of Charles (**Spiderman**) Fries' TV-movie, **Crash: The True Story of Flight 401**. This is a two-hour minute-by-minute reconstruction of a plane crash. With commercials!

Action in Space

Big, black Fred Williamson, a self-made actor-writer-producer-diractor of action-packed thud 'n' blundar exploitation crime movies, has switched to space, Italian style, with **Jamara, Knight of the Stars**. I like Fred's films (ha calls his company Po'Boy Productions), they're tough and totally without pretension. I look forward to **Jamara**. Not so sure about his costers. Bo Svanson and somebody (something) called Cryppy Yocard . . . thet's too close to 'treshy' for comfort, Fred.

All Smiles. Bet giving nothing away, the crew of the factory starship, USCSS Nostromo, in Ridley Scott's Hitchcockian space-suspense movie, **Alien**. *Go parade, left to right: executive officer John Hurt, science officer Ian Holm, warrant officer Sigourney Weaver, navigator Veronica Cartwright, engineer Yaphet Kotto, engineering technician Harry Dean Stanton and the bearded skipper, Tom Skerritt.*

Alien Encounters

So naar and yet so far . . . Nothing much emanating from the top secret set of the s8,000,000 **Alien** at Shepperton's H-stage, previous home of spacial scenes in **2001, Star Wars** and even **The Dmen**. Tha set isn't exactly closed, except when the alien is around . . . or thought to ba around. Nobody's saying anything about tha alien, either. Certainly not its creator (and writer) Dan O'Bannon. Producar Gordon Carroll, however, has commented on the perfect symmetry of this part-life, part non-life thingia, which may be horrifying yet also a thing of beauty—'totally dependent on life to recraata but which has no function bayond that.' *I see . . .* I think.

Described by many, including director Ridley Scott, as a classic terror tale, **Alien** has saven 21st cantury fraaboaters waking from hyparsleep on the other side of the universe. One only of this group will surviva the movie. Place your bets now on: Tom Skerrit, Yaphet Kotto, Sigourney Weavar, Veronica Cartwright, Harry Dean Stanton, Ian Holm or John Hurt. . . . But don't phone us. We don't know. That's the other major secret, the reason for stars clamming up in mid-chat, and why publicist Brian Doyle (who also worked on **Star Wars**) can issue eight photos only, one portrait par star, and a group shot of all of tham. Minus, ales, the alien.

Spielberg Presents

Steven Spielbarg is pushing talented mates again. Good for him. He's executive producar on **Continental Divide**, a Rocky Mountains love story, produced and directed by Hal Brood and Matthew Robbins, who penned Stava's first cinema movie, **Sugarland Express**. They recently made their first movie with **Corvette Summer**, lately described as tha film which has **Star Wars'** Mark Hamill 'carrying on a lova affair with an automobile.' See whet happens when you're spurned by a robot?

Sounds Great

Driva-ins go SF. In a Los Angeles driva-in, you can hear **Star Wars** in either English or Spanish. And on a new sound-process, Cine-Fi, which is connected direct to your car's FM radio, instead of the speaker hung on your window. Like it!

Sounds Better

Stirling Silliphant may yet earn our forgiveness for **The Swarm**. He tells us he's scripting an original SF story from S. Zav Gruer and Dougles Winfield Scott: **The Weather War**. If it works, Stirling can quit his sackcloth and ashes and we'll welcome him back to sanity with a hearty cheer.

...S..TO..COME.....THINGS

The Kings are Angry...

Uneasy lie the crowns of George Luces end Steven Spielberg. They may be top of the tree, but lately they've discovered they're far from inviolate. At Universal, anyway. Both box-office kings have blown their stecks at current machinations from inside Hollywood's Corridors of Power.

Luces has been involved in a copyright infringement row ebout **Star Wers** with Universel's much-touted new space series, **Battlestar: Galactica**. Spielberg is engry ('you won't like me when I'm angry') over an episode of **The Incredible Hulk** using some of his **Duel** footege.

Of the two, Spielberg seems to have more reason to complain. Lucas hes got to live with people ripping off his **Star Wars**. But no director can sit still and see whole portions of his films used to provide the major action (thereby saving budget money) in e TV series. It was bad enough that the **Hulk** team swiped the **Duel** story-line, but to actually use the dozen or more minutes of Spielberg footege instead of shooting their own stuff with a different car end lorry was compounding the crime.

And since they never even esked for his permission, Spielberg is now having his Universal contrect re-written to prevent further cannibelisetion of his films. I'd hate to see the mother ship from **Close Encounters** end up in **Laverne and Shirley** five years from now . . . !

The Luces row ebout the **Battlestar** series (already released in e movie format in Canada with greet success; Europe is next) hit the fan when the show's executive producer, Glenn Lerson, seid Luces hed seen the pilot episode end would not join the lew-suit announced by 20th Century Fox. This was the truth—but not the entire truth.

Lucas could not join eny Fox suit, es Fox hold the **Star Wars** copyright, not him. But he did feel the Universal series was attempting to copy his film, "to pass their series off es some sort of **Star Wars** for television," and wasn't pleased at the prospect. "I feel this will ultimately be very hermful to what I heve created."

He said he hoped the Fox suit would be successful. Then, Universal's merketing erm filed a counter-suit against Fox for interfering with the sales of **Battlestar** products! The fight gathered speed . . . until Universel made it clear they will not introduce eny more **Star Wars** rips in their series. Difficult, as Luces' speciel effects man, John Dykstre, is running the TV action.

See, not that easy to be et the top . . .

Seat Wars

This must be e record. **Star Wers** has finally closed its run et the Cine Capri theatre in Phoenix, Arizone. The cineme hes 800 seets and showed the Luces film for five times a day for 13 months, using up three prints—and taking et the box-office the grend solo-cineme total of *$3 million*!

CE3K on TV

Any day now I expect **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** to be sold to Americen television. And no doubt to the ABC network, which paid es much es $7½ million for **The Deep**. Columbia's esking price for the Spielberg film, though, could be as high as $20 million . . . plus another $1½ million for cable-vision rights.

Gimme Back...

Americen movie distributor Don Rugoff is engry thet his **Pumping Iron** documentery hes been sold to television in e peckage of nine movies. Don quite rightly feels he could heve got a better price selling it solo. After ell, the film features Arnold (**Conan**) Schwarzenegger end **The Incredible Hulk** himself, Lou Ferrigno.

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.TO..COME.....THINGS..T

From the director of the horror-shocker **It's Alive** *Larry Cohen comes a controversial new film* **Bone.** *Cohen writes, directs and produces. More news as it becomes available.*

Stone Rolling

Virginia Stona, widow of director Andraw Stone (**Tha Night Holds Terror**) has set up a new production shop with her new husband, scenarist J. A. McCombie. First of their five features will be **Galaxy**, an SF special in 70mm and LasarVision special effects. Shooting, as par the old Stone style, will be all location—in Navada and Canada. She'll have to changa that title though, otherwise Universal's **Battle ster : Galactica** will probably sua, which would make a change from avaryone alsa suing them. . . .

Trek News Flash

Okay, Trekkers, you can take it easy now. It's official. Shooting on the **Star Trek** movie *has* started at Paramount studios.

Italian SF

And now for the bad news . . . Itelian filmmakar (it says here) Alberto Da Martino is making **Return to Atlantis** and **Blast of the Second Galactic Empire** in Rome. Mr. De Martino, you might racall, was responsible for tha excrucieting movia, **Holocaust 2000**. You hava bean warned.

Conan and Co.

No news is good news. Wa hope. Everything ramains firmly at squara one on Edward Pressmen's $15 million bid to turn Robart E. Howard's **Conan** into a barbaric movia. Oliver Stona has taken over the script from John Milius, Arnold Schwarzenagger will still¬star, and Frenk Frezette is visual consultant. Now it seems that John Milius mey ratura to the fold to direct the result, which according to Pressman (the **Phantom of the Paradise** producar) will look "closer to Tolkein than **Star Wars**".

Barry's Progress

Ex-architect John Berry not the film score composar but Britain's Oscar-winning production dasigner on **Star Wars**, has won his director's spurs. He'll halm Sir Lew Grada's **Saturn 3**, starring Farrah Fawcatt Majors and a robot. For a while, stega design was marely John's hobby—his first film job, **Cleopatra**, had him working as a prop draughtsman. He later becama assistent to the MGM art director at Elstrae, and sinca going solo his movias have included **Decline and Fall, Kelly's Heroes, A Clockwork Orange** and Saul Bess' under-rated SF movia about ants, **Phase IV**. He also worked on two movies that in the end naver mada it—Fred Zinnaman's **Man's Fate** and Kubrick's **Napoleon**. Doubt if either film-meker will gat him back again. I mean, how can you keep him down on the design table, efter he's seen Farrah?

Three Down...

Tha third of Marvel Comic's superheroes to win a TV sarias is **Dr. Strange**. Actor Peter Hooten (of **Orca—Killar Whale**) has tha title role. Ha's supported by Jessica Walter, a lady I've never felt too easy about since **Play Misty For Ma**.

TV-Movies

Having started to make TV-movias to rivel old movias on television, Universal-MCA are now going to release a bunch of them to rival current movies in cinemas. Thanks, mainly, to the Euro-cinema impact of Spielberg's **Duel**, a big heap of Universal TV-movie stock is now available for theetrical releasa outside America.

The first package includes **The Secret of Bigfoot** episodes (two of them) from the **Six Million Dollar Man** series . . . and **The Night The Earth Shook**, starring James Brolin, Don Mitchell, James McEechin, Abby Lincoln and Brooke Bundey.

Another one to intrigue anyone who missed it on the box is **Sarah T—Portrait of e Taenage Alcoholic**. Star-wise, this has a hot teaming—Linda **Exorcist** Blair and Mark **Star Wars** Hemill.

Very Flashy

Tha count-down begins on **Flash Gordon . . .** Pra-production and John Richardson's explosive spacial effects have begun at Pinewood in June on tha $20,000,000 Dino da Laurantiis apology to us all for **King Kong**. Nic Roeg, as we all know by now, is directing; tha film is designed by one of Dino's guys, Fernandeo Scarfiotti, and the script, besad on Alex Raymond's comic strip, is by Roeg and Micheel Allin. Tha real shooting begins naxt yaar in Janury.

Dr Strange, *portrayed by Peter Hooten (above) is the third Marvel character to reach the screen.*

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Balaban played the part of interpreter to Claude Lacombes' (Francois Truffaut) in the film. He also kept a sensitive revealing, and often very funny, diary.

Balaban is a friend of director Steven Spielberg and during the shooting was the confidant of Francois Truffaut the gifted french movie director. He traveled with the movie to Wyoming; Bombay; India; Alabama; the Mojave Desert and Hollywood. He lived and worked with two of the most important film-makers of all time. He had a front row seat for the most lavish special effects in Hollywood's history. He listened to union disputes which threatened to halt production on one of the most expensive movies ever made. He became an "investigator" for the world's foremost UFO expert.

Since all journalists and writers were barred during the shooting of the movie, his diary is the only on-the-spot account of both the making of the movie, and, more importantly, the off-screen lives of the people involved in this fantastic project.

A number of books about the making of movies have to be reconstructed by writers who only have post-production interviews to work with. But since THE CLOSE ENCOUNTERS DIARY is a first hand account it has an immediacy, a "You Are There" perspective on all the people and events that makes movie-making *really* interesting.

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Further to the news item in Starburst 3 concerning the on/off nature of the Star Trek movie we present an update feature which should, once and for all, put Starburst readers in the picture.

STAR TREK·THE MOTION PICTURE

It has been confirmed that the U.S.S. Enterprise, the most celebrated space ship of all time, has been returned to active duty.

While Star Fleet Command would not reveal details of the classified mission, informed sources indicated the Enterprise has been pressed back into service to counter an awesome and Earth-threatening development in the far reaches of the Galaxy.

The mission, according to these sources, is certain to be the most spectacular ever undertaken by the famed Star-ship.

The Enterprise will again be commanded by Captain James T. Kirk, who has succeeded in reuniting his former crew, including his First Officer, the Vulcan Mr. Spock.

Prior to its departure from Earth, the Enterprise is being refitted with the latest, most sophisticated instruments and weaponry known to 23rd century space technology.

The Star Trek movie is definitely on! That was the word at an extravagant press conference held by Paramount pictures earlier this year. The working title for the film is **Star Trek: The Motion Picture** and the budget is currently at $15 million. Shooting began this summer with oscar-winning Robert Wise (**The Andromeda Strain, The Day the Earth Stood Still**) in the director's seat, and Gene Roddenberry, the brain behond the tv series, producing. Roddenberry has gathered together the entire original cast, including William Shatner in the role of Kirk and Leonard Nimoy for the part of Mr. Spock.

Other members of the cast include De Forrest Kelly, James Doohan, Nichelle Nichols, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Majel Barrett and Grace Lee Whitney. And added to the original crew will be newcomer Persis Khambatta, a former Miss India and winner of the Indian equivalent of an Oscar for *Best Actress*. Miss Khambatta's appearence in the film as an exotic crew member joining the Enterprise from a distant planet, will mark her American film debut.

The script for the movie is based on a story by Alan Dean Foster, author of the second Star Wars novel and the *Star Trek Log* series of books, and the screenplay was written by Roddenberry and Harold Livingstone. Dennis Lynton Clark is currently doing a "polish up" job on the script which was originally slated to be for the two-hour Star Trek tv pilot, but which now needs "scaling up" for the big screen.

In the original pilot script, because Nimoy had not been available for the tv series, it was planned to give the Enterprise a new science officer. He was to be a full-blooded Vulcan named Xon and the part had been given to an unknown called David Gautreaux. However, Gautreaux was not in attendance at the press conference and no mention has been made of him in any subsequent press releases. Rumours suggest that Lieutenant Xon has been transferred back to his Vulcan cruiser now that Spock is returning to active duty aboard the Enterprise.

When quizzed over his apparent reluctance to become involved in any further additions to the Star Trek legend Nimoy stated that it was more a matter of prior commitments than anything else. He added that he did not want to see an Enterprise without a Spock or any one else playing the part. Shatner also stated that he had had a "long and complicated relationship" with Paramount before he signed the contract.

The storyline is under a tight security blanket at the moment although the studio did inform the press that Nurse Chapel has become a doctor and that Ensign Chekov has been promoted to Chief of Security aboard the Enterprise. In the earlier version of the screenplay, Kirk had risen to the rank of Starfleet Admiral and Spock had left the service to return to his native Vulcan. It is unlikely that these latter changes will remain in the new film script.

The sets have already been built for the new version of the Enterprise which was to have appeared in the projected tv series. These sets are being improved upon to bring them into line with the larger budget available. The new Enterprise occupies four sound stages at the Paramount studios around which has been thrown a tight security net. Nobody is allowed near the sets without permission, though reports have been heard that the bridge of the Enterprise is based on the original with many technical improvements and the engine room has been redesigned completely.

The studios mentioned Douglas Trumbull (the man behind the special effects of 2001 and Close Encounters) as being instrumental in setting up the special effects team for the Star Trek movie. Heading the fx boys is Robert Able who is best known for his American tv commercials, which incorporated spectacular special effects. The studio stated that the Star Trek movie will be using special effects techniques which have been developed in recent years.

The movie will be filmed in 35mm, though some special effects will be shot in 70mm. The completed film is scheduled to be released, in 70mm, in June of next year.

The general concensus of opinion among those actors and technicians involved in the Star Trek project is that this time, Paramount really does mean to ensure the Enterprise will once again "boldly go where no man has gone before".

Feature by Alan Murdoch

BOOK WORLD

Reviews by Alex Carpenter & Sam E. Oeli

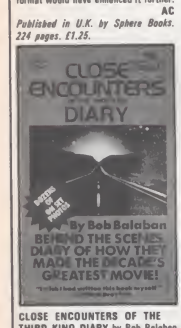
FOTONOVEL: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Obviously inspired by the success of their Star Trek Fotonovels in America, Mandala Productions have turned their attention to the "Big Screen".

The format is practically the same as that used for the Star Trek books, although leaving out the "bubbles" that surrounded the dialogue in the earlier books is an improvement. Over 400 full-colour stills have been used to adapt the film making it visually excellent, though a larger format would have enhanced it further.

AC

Published in U.K. by Sphere Books. 224 pages. £1.25.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND DIARY by Bob Balaban

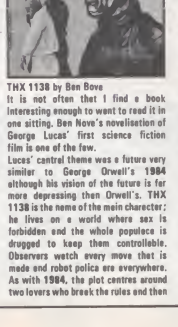
This is one of the most interesting of all the cinema-related books that have been published in the last three months. Although it can be classified as a "Making of Close Encounters" product it is far different from other books dealing with the production of a movie or television series. Previous books of this type (**Making of Space 1999/Star Trek** etc.) have been compiled by a writer hired to sit on the sidelines and collate all the facts with the final result that although informative they are too full of facts and figures to be completely enjoyable. As author Bob Balaban played the part of Francois Truffaut's interpreter, this book is written from in front of the cameras by someone who was an integral part of the whole production. It won't tell you exactly how every special effect was achieved but there is a vast amount of behind-the-scenes information coupled with anecdotes ranging from Richard Dreyfuss' run-in with the Ku Klux Klan to problems filming on the "Big Set". Many of the items are amusing, more are insights into the difficulties of the film industry —but none are boring.

To complete the package nearly 50 photographs have been included, not as padding or "hard sell" but to illustrate the entries in the book.

If CE3K knocked you for six then you must get this book. Even if you didn't enjoy the film you will find the diary interesting.

AC

Published in U.K. by Bunch Books. 192 pages. 95p.



THX 1138 by Ben Bova

It is not often that I find a book interesting enough to want to read it in one sitting. Ben Nove's novelisation of George Lucas' first science fiction film is one of the few.

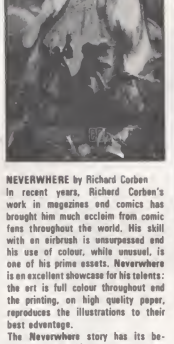
Lucas' central theme was a future very similar to George Orwell's **1984** although his vision of the future is far more optimistic than Orwell's. **THX 1138** is the name of the main charector; he lives on a world where sex is forbidden and the whole populace is drugged to keep them controllable. Observers watch every move that is made and robot police are everywhere.

As with **1984**, the plot centres around two lovers who break the rules and then follows their fate as the forces of the law are brought to bear on them.

Ben Nove has done an excellent job of adapting the screenplay into a memorable novel. There is no way that this pessimistic view of the future could be called "entertainment", but it is definitely a very good read.

AC

Published by Panther Books. 160 pages. 75p.



NEVERWHERE by Richard Corben

In recent years, Richard Corben's work in magazines and comics has brought him much eccloim from comic fans throughout the world. His skill with an airbrush is unsurpassed and his use of colour, while unusual, is one of his prime assets. **Neverwhere** is an excellent showcase for his talents: the art is full colour throughout and the printing, on high quality paper, reproduces the illustrations to their best advantage.

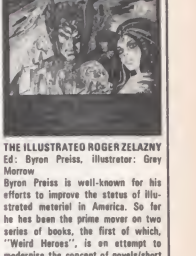
The **Neverwhere** story has its beginnings over 12 years ago when Corben was working for an animation studio in America. He evolved the idea of an animated film that commenced with a live actor slowly being transformed, on screen, into an animated drawing. He worked on this idea in his spare time, and, finally, with the help of the studio **Neverwhere** was completed. It is an interesting (though short) film, which has won three different awards for its creator. Since that time Corben has taken the original concept and expanded it into a beautiful strip called "Den". This strip first appeared in the French **Metal Hurlent** magazine and the first two chapters were also included in the American fantasy magazine **Ariel**. The complete strip has only recently been generally available to the English speaking world through the pages of **Metal Hurlent's** American counterpart, **Heavy Metal**. **Neverwhere** is the first time that "Den" has been available in one volume.

The story deals with the problems that beset Den when he is transported from our world into a Universe where magic works and monsters roam. To describe it simply as a comic strip would be to do the story and the art a great injustice; graphic novels are becoming constantly accaptable in America and this is one of the best to date.

The film has had very limited screenings in Britain but I understand **Neverwhere** will be on the programme for the forthcoming Fantasy Film Convention this October. It is well worth seeing.

AC

Published by Ariel/Ballantine, USA. 112 pages. 11¾ x 9". £5—import.



THE ILLUSTRATED ROGER ZELAZNY

Ed: Byron Preiss, illustrator: Grey Morrow

Byron Preiss is well-known for his efforts to improve the status of illustrated meterial in America. So far he has been the prime mover on two series of books, the first of which, "Weird Heroes", is an attempt to modernise the concept of novels/short stories accompanied by complementary art. This is the more successful of the two series. Book 8 (featuring stories by Farmer, Moorcock, Bova, etc., and illustrated by Russell, Chaykin and Alcala, to name but a few) was recently published in America. The other series —"Fiction Illustrated"—are book-length novels told in strip form although, regrettably, this has not met with the same success as "Weird Heroes".

The Illustrated Roger Zelazny is his latest and most ambitious project, printed on de-luxe paper with all bar one adaptation in full colour and shows in excellent use of illustration.

Altogether, three Zelazny stories have been adapted, the best of these undoubtedly being "A Rose for Ecclesiastes", although "The Doors of His Face, The Lamps of His Mouth" and "The Furies" are almost as good. But all three adaptations are surpassed by "Shadowjack" which Zelazny wrote especially for this volume. This being the only tale in the book that is told in strip form, set as a *prequel* to his novel "Jack of Shadows".

Grey Morrow is a telented artist and this book is a fine showcase for his work. The art complements Zelazny's words perfectly but it is probably on the "Shadowjack" strip that Morrow is at his best. Unfortunately, 10 pages have been wasted on full page 'tapestries', intended to illustrate scenes from other Zelazny works—the art is more than adequate for the purpose but the space could have been used far better if another adaptation had been included. **AC**

Published by Baronet, USA. 96 pages. 11 x 8¼". £5.70—import.

SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE by Alan Dean Foster

Apart from his own science fiction novels, Alan Foster's previous work includes the novelisation of the Star Trek animated episodes (published as the Star Trek Logs). He was also the (uncredited) writer of the original "Star Wars" novel and that, presumably, is the reason why he has been granted the 'honour' of the first sequel. Chewbecca and Han Solo are the only major characters who didn't make it from the film to this: all the other favourites are there together with some new exotic Star Wars aliens. The story this time is set almost entirely on one planet with sufficient strangeness to ensure its place in the Star Wars mythos. In very basic terms, this is the tale of two travellers (Luke & Leia) shipwrecked on a strange planet and their fight for survivel and escape. Into this the author has woven the search for a gem, which can amplify the powers of the Force, and, in the background . . . Darth Vedar.

Followers of Star Wers will not be disappointed; "ordinery" science fiction readers will find that it is a nice idea but nothing to get excited about. Hopefully the Star Wars Corporation are ensuring that the various Star Wars incarnations—(the film sequel, this book, the Marvel monthly and weekly comic, and any future stories)—are consistent. It would be a sin for Star Wers to lose its credulity because no one cered that, say, Darth Veder wes proven to be Luke's father on film but when unmasked in e novel he is found to be a complete stranger. **AC**

Published in UK by Sphere Books. 224 pages. 85p.

RAVEN: SWORDSMISTRESS OF CHAOS by Richard Kirk

If your idee of fentesy involves very besic stories with plenty of cliches, then there is no doubt that you will enjoy Reven. It is not a badly written book but when an author scatters scenes of purely gretuitous sex through the main plot then it is easy to see that the audience he is eiming for does not include fans of the genre. The cover, with its semi-nude female centre-piece, is designed to catch the eye of the casuel reader looking for a little bit of off-beet titillation to pess the time on a long train journey and confirms the market at which Richerd Kirk aims.

The cover though well peinted is, as usuel, uncredited. I have often wondered why publishers do this—after all, the cover attracts the prospective buyer to the book.

Author Kirk has done a lot of research into the fentesy field and has included all the major aspects—sorcery, legends and e quest. Unfortunely, there is nothing to meke the story stend out from all that has gone before. Corgi, however, obviously have high hopes for Reven as they already have two further books plenned for the series. **AC**

Published by Corgi Books. 176 pages. 70p.

Frenk Kelly Freas—The Art of Science Fiction

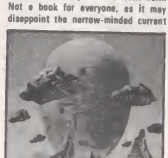
With the recent upsurge in medie science fiction swinging chiefly to the visuel aspects through extravegent movie effects, publishers have been quick to realise the potentiel of large glossy books on science fiction art. Of many such books currently in production or generally on sele, one recent compilation stends out.

Those fans old enough to remember the SF pulp magazines, which acted as launching pads for many of today's top writers, may also recall the artistic talent they employed at the time. Talent that reached a quality high enough to compete with the story writers in guereenteeing high sales.

Yet with the advent of the 1970s, and **Science Fiction Monthly**, though SF art reached a peek in popularity, it was through the new wave illustrators who appeared more as technical experts

then imeginative innovators.

Frenk Kelly Freas — The Art of Science Fiction acts as a refreshing change from the current vogue of microscopically-detailed spaceships, taking the reader back in time (as far as 1950) and showing the veriety of art possible within the SF megezine and book cover field as it traces the career of Freas up to his current work. Not e book for everyone, as it may disappoint the narrow-minded current



readers, but, for those who can appreciete the quality and imagination of Freas, plus the unequelled enthusiasm he has retained over his 25 yeer stint, this is e *must*.

On e nostelgic level alone, it brings memories of the '50s gushing back. The times, the styles, the magazines and the books. Also, it adds e new dimension to Freas's work vie the artist's marginel comments on each of his colourful covers reproduced.

For those who see SF Art as something more then hunks of metal . . . this item is an essentiel eddition to the bookshelf. **SED**

Published by The Donning Company, USA. Distributed in Britein by Big O Publishing. 120 pages. 8½ x 11". £4.50.

SCI-FI NOW by Alen Frenk

This is one of the first books on science fiction movies that has been published in the weke of Star Wers and Close Encounters; undoubtedly it is far from being the lest. Containing over one hundred stills with nearly helf in full colour, it is good velue for money and Octopus are to be congrateleted on keeping the price reesonable. For far too long the majority of books on the cineme have been published in hardback at e price which puts e dent in many prospective buyers' pockets. Quite possibly, the lower cover price is attributable to the decision to publish Sci-Fi Now as a softcover, thus making it eveilable to e wider audience.

The book's sub-title—"10 Exciting Years of Science Fiction from 2001 to Star Wers and Close Encounters of the Third Kind"—is slightly misleading since television science fiction is also included.

It is difficult to be criticel of e book

that is little more then e catelogue of science fiction films and television covering the lest ten years, but far too much space has been given over to Star Wers (especially the number of stills included). The author would have achieved more had he looked at the pest decade in slightly greater depth. There is very little that will be of interest to the long time fen but newcomers to the genre will find it very useful. **AC**

Published by Octopus Books. 80 pages. 11¾ x 8¼". £1.25.

RECORD WORLD

Reviews by Alex Carpentar
and Sam E. Dell

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

It would be ridiculous to attempt to criticise John Williams as a film music composer — he has proven his capabilities on thet scora (sic) bayond any doubt. However, a good scora does not necessarily maka a good album and CE3K is a casa in point.

His music suited the mood(s) of the film admirably but as a record it leaves a lot to be desired; it is not so much "tunes" in the accepted sanse of the word but rathar a collection of musical sound affects which are not particularly aasy to listen to. Of spacial interest to stereo affects buffs, howaver, would be side two, track two, "The Conversetion" (batween the earth-based synthesiser and the mothership).

As an extra bonus a free single is included with the album; this is the "hit" theme from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, and you would be forgiven for believing there were jokers at Arista . . . tha B-side is blank! Thesa suspicions ara further strengthened by the rather inappropriate catalogue number.

AC

Arista Records. Cat: DLART 2001. Playing time 42:08. £3.95

ASIMOV'S FOUNDATION (Read by William Shatner)

Those who were fortunate will have heard the excellant BBC Radio 4 adaptation of Isaac Asimov's Foundation Trilogy, complata with the Radiophonic Workshop's usual top quality accompaniment. Those who missed aithar its original airing four years ago, or its rapaat airing last year, can now legally possess their own copy of an alternative version, via Ceadmon Racords.

However, this Shatner-narrated album is quite faithful to the original novels, although in its 60 minutes playing time only the very baginning of the Trilogy can ba included; the portion that sats the stage for the actual Empire vs. Trantor avents that are to follow.

Pleasant to listan to, though somewhat unsatisfactory baing as it is only an introduction to the total.

Possibly, the biggest problem with this, and the various other SF Narration saries from Caadmon, is that, unlika music, story-reading loses its fascination after only a few play-throughs, damanding total attention throughout.

SEO

Released by Caadmon Records, New York. Distributed in UK by Taakfield Ltd. Cat: TC 1508. Playing time 59:24. £3.95. Also available on cassatte: CDL51508. £4.75

JEFF WAYNE'S MUSICAL VERSION OF THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Jaff Wayna has assamblad an all-star cast to translata H. G. Wall's original novel into an interesting record, combining the narrative talants of Richard Burton with some of the foremost membars of today's rock music scene to produce an atmospharic retelling of the story.

It is obvious that a lot of hard work and cara has gona into this project and the final rasult makes very good listening.

This is a two-record sat: record 1 is subtitled "The Coming of the Martians", record 2 being "The Earth under the Martians". Richard Burton portrays a journalist and relates the story as a link batween the music. Although most of the numbers are instrumantal thera ara fiva piaces sung by Julia Covington, David Essex, Justin Heyward (Moody Blues), Phil Lynott (Thin Lizzy), Jo Partridge and Chris Thompson (Manfrad Mann's Earth Band), each of whom takes the part of a character within the context of the story.

Initially the work seamed to be a collection of music held togather only by Richard Burton's admirable story-telling but after a few plays the tracks all came together to form a strong record with a good cantral theme. This is another album where care has baan takan with the packaging. Including a 16-page full colour booklet which contains a song sheet and notes on the artistes together with some nica, double-page paintings of scanes from the story.

The strongest track on the album is Jo Partridge's instrumental, "The Heat Rey", though it is understandabla why "Forever Autumn" by Justin Heyward was released as a single. Dominating the whole album is the main theme which starts as "The Eve of the War", performed by Justin Hayward, going on to become the basis of the background to Burton's voice. Also an integral part of this thama is the axcallant aarie music used to identify the Martian War machinas.

Dospita the saamingly absurd concapt of such, a *poster mag* (40p) has baan ralaased to tia in with this album.

AC/SEO

CBS Records. Cat: CBS 96000. Playing time 95:23. £6.99

BRADBURY'S THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES (Read by Leonard Nimoy)

Nimoy's reading of Rey Bradbury's classic story comes across far more affectivaly than his fallow Trak-star Bill Shatner's Foundation reading. Not particularly because of the subject matter, but rather tha fact that Leonard Nimoy just happans to have a better reading voice.

Another advantage of this album is that the subject matter is not an apic-length work. Thus, rather than being able to hear merely a wall-produced "teaser" for tha book, one can enjoy the satisfaction of complata short stories.

The Martian Chronicles, in its running time of 49 minutas 25 saconds, featuras the reading of two short stories: *There Will Come Soft Rains*, telling of the problams attachad to a futuristic, totally mechanised house built to sarve every need of its occupants; *Usher II*, concerning a Fahrenheit 451 concept of the futura and posing the question—can the world of ideas and imagination ba aliminatad by man who dastroy and forbid books?

Both "house" stories ware originally written in 1950, a time whan the media was telling Americans that the advances of technology made during the War were going to be used in peaca time to further the American consumer's dream. In his unique way, Bradbury (through Nimoy) presents us with a still-possible, frightaning alternative.

SEO

Released by Caadmon Records, New York. Distributed in UK by Taakfield Ltd. Cat: TC 1466. Playing time 49:25. £3.95. Cassette: CDL51466. £4.75.

THE STORY OF STAR WARS

This is an editad version of the full soundtrack (dialogue, sound effects, music and all) and nothing of importanca has been omittad. To maintain continuity, Roscoe Lee Brown (the voica of Darth Vadar) provides an explanatory narration batween the sections of dialogue.

Fox have done a very good job of packaging this record and in consequence it has become less another piace of Star Wars marchandising and more a souvenir of the film.

Apart from the record, the double sleava contains a 16-page booklet complata with over 40 full colour stills from the film and although a number have seen print many times before, others have rarely (if ever) bean reproduced.

In no way can a true Star Wars fan be without this album, unless of course he can afford to own a print of the film!

AC

20th Cantury Fox Records. Cat: BSW 1001 Playing time 50:05. £4.50

STORY: STEVE MOORE ART: CHRIS BAKER

I DEAL IN GOLD, NOT SILVER! COME BACK WITH FIVE GOLD PIECES, HALFWIT!
OOOH...!
AND AS THE BOTTLES SMASH AROUND HIM, MELKIN RAGES... A FIERY RAGE FANNED BY THE WINDS OF DESIRE...
OH, PLEASE ...WHY DID YOU HURT HIM?
HA HA HA HA HA
MELKIN KNOWS HE HAS LOST TOO MUCH FACE TO SELL ANY MORE WIPS IN TRABZON... AND YET HE ALSO KNOWS HE CANNOT LEAVE WITHOUT ISELLE...
WHY? I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN A HUMAN WOMAN BEFORE... WHY THIS CRAVING...?
BUT THE STRENGTH OF AN ELF IS NO MATCH FOR THAT OF THE DIRE WOLF... AND MELKIN MUST WAIT UNTIL...
NOW'S MY CHANCE, WHILE HE'S IN THE TENT AND SOON WE'LL SEE...
AND, IN THAT FROZEN SPACE OF TIME...
YOU SPURNED MY SILVER, RAZUL MAZTIK! I OFFER IT AGAIN ... A SILVER SWORD... IN THE HEART!
BY THE FANGS OF..!
BAMF!
AAARRROOOWW!
AND, MINUTES LATER...
AAH, HE'S TAKING THE PIPE ...GOOD!
AND RAZUL MAZTIK HAS NEVER BEFORE KNOWN A SMOKING MIXTURE AS POWERFUL AS THIS!
AND THEN...
QUICKLY, GIRL! GET ON MY CART! WE MUST GET AWAY BEFORE THEY REALISE WHAT'S HAPPENED!
YOU KILLED HIM... FOR ME!
SOON, A PALE MOON, A ROARING FIRE, A STILL, COOL, STARLIT NIGHT... AND MELKIN GETS TO KNOW THE BEAUTEOUS ISELLE...
AND WHAT DOES MELKIN THINK OF HIS FIRST EVER HUMAN WOMAN?
DELICIOUS! BURP
AND THEN THEY ARE GONE, VANISHING INTO THE DARKLING FOREST...
OH, MELKIN... HOW BRAVE YOU ARE!
IT WAS NOTHING... I ONLY KNEW THAT I WANTED YOU...

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